PATTERNS OF POWER · THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

The Dutch Republic

The Complete Study · 1572 — 1648 — 1795

Thomas J. Bryan

with Claude (Anthropic) · 2026

held as tested, not revealed

Held as tested, not revealed.

A case study in the Patterns of Power series.
Primary sources quoted exactly; modern scholarship paraphrased and credited.
Contested figures given as ranges. Nothing reconstructed from memory.

CONTENTS

PREFACE
Preface and Outline

LANDSCAPE
The Spade in the Dike

MODULE 1
The Garrison Had Gone to Utrecht

MODULE 2
As If They Were but One Province

MODULE 3
Principally in These Lands

MODULE 4
The Magistracy Shall Be Requested

MODULE 5
My Hand Is Stern, but My Heart Is Kind

MODULE 6
Entered as a Purchase

MODULE 7
From Italy, Germany, and Elsewhere

MODULE 8
The Same Man in Four Chairs

MODULE 9
Not His Competent Judge

MODULE 10
The Rivers Froze

MODULE 11
Three Hundred Thousand, and Never Fifty

MODULE 12
The Same Men, the Same Decade

Preface and Outline

Front matter · how this study was made, the disciplines it holds itself to, and a map of its fourteen parts

The collaboration

This is a case study in the Patterns of Power series, applying the series' framework to the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, from the seizure of the towns of Holland and Zeeland in the summer of 1572 to the entry of a French army across the frozen rivers in January 1795. The framework is a lens for reading how any order of power is founded, dressed and held: the floor of force beneath every order, the robe of doctrine laid over the floor to make the force cheap, the settlement that divides the spoils among the armed, the cost column in which each subject prices defection, the formation that installs a person's cast of authorities before he can weigh them, the seam that manages the belief on which the whole depends, the default by which an elite coordinates without instruction — and, running through all of it, position logic: the proposition that rulers in like positions converge on like solutions, because a position poses a problem with only a few good answers.

The Dutch Republic was chosen because it isolates three variables the collection had been carrying without separating.

The first is the manner of the founding. Every other case in this collection begins with a conquest: an army takes ground, disarms a population, and installs a settlement on top of it. The Dutch floor was not conquered. It **defected**. Twenty-five ships and some six hundred men arrived at an undefended port on 1 April 1572, and within ten weeks two provinces had changed hands without a battle worth the name, because in town after town the burgher militia declined to fight and a faction inside the walls was ready to open the gate. That single fact writes the whole constitution: a floor acquired unit by unit is bought unit by unit, each unit's price is its own consent, and the resulting order inherits as many vetoes as it had defections — immediately, before any theory exists to justify them. It also writes the ending, because an order founded by people whom an internal garrison would have stopped never builds one, and remains permanently vulnerable to the mechanism that made it. In January 1795 the towns went over again, in ten days, by the same procedure.

The second is the basis of the hold. The framework expects a cheap hold to mean either a belief driven deep enough that people police themselves or a threat credible enough that nobody tests it. The Dutch domestic hold was extraordinarily cheap and it was neither. There was no national formation in this order and no apparatus capable of installing one — no state schools, no compulsory church membership, no common catechism, and, until 1701, not even a common calendar. What held it was arithmetic: the fullest benefit column in Europe, and an exit dial that ran inward. That makes this the collection's cleanest test of whether an order can run cheap without deep belief, and the answer is yes — on different terms, and with a different fragility, because a belief is a sunk cost and a benefit reprices.

The third is an object the framework had not previously needed to describe: the **chartered company**. The East India Company was not a business that acquired governmental powers. It was a governmental form that acquired an accounting convention, and the convention is what separates it from every viceroyalty in this collection. A viceroy's tribute is entered in a fiscal record as tribute, at a rate, with a name; the Company's compulsory deliveries at prices it set were entered as purchases. Not one line was false. The extraction lives entirely in the spread between an administered price and a market the grower could not reach, and that spread is not an item anywhere. So the study's central measurement here is not a level but a **variance**: one order ran the lowest coercion in Europe at its centre and among the highest anywhere at its edge, simultaneously, through the same institutions, decided by the same men — and the two settings were never compared, because comparison requires somebody standing where both are visible, and the corporate form removed that position.

One periodisation decision was taken early and should be stated, because it departs from the usual account. This study dates the founding to 1572, not to the Union of Utrecht of 1579 or the Act of Abjuration of 1581. The floor was seized between April and July of 1572; the towns were taken, the magistrates replaced, and at the first free assembly of the States of Holland at Dordrecht on 19 July the Prince of Orange was recognised and promised in the same breath that he would not govern Holland without the consent of the States. Every load-bearing institution of the Republic dates from those months. The Union is the settlement written seven years after the seizure and the Abjuration is the robe written nine years after — which is the framework's own order, floor first, settlement second, robe third, and which explains why both documents read as the paperwork of a fait accompli.

The study was built the way the series is built, one module at a time. The author brought the framework, the direction and the judgement of the whole, and held the

collaboration to its disciplines; Claude, Anthropic's model, did the research — verifying load-bearing quotations, dates and figures by web search against sources reproducing the primary text before any module was written — and produced the drafts, applying the framework module by module, each presented and confirmed before the next was begun. Where the research contradicted the framework's expectation, or contradicted the working notes carried into the study, the research was followed and the expectation revised. The framework is scaffolding and a lens, not a cage, and several of this study's better findings are corrections to what it had predicted.

The method

The engine throughout is the method of information asymmetry: the exact public words set beside the exact words of the ground, the arithmetic laid out, and the sum left to the reader. The 1581 manifesto's charge that a king had set over great men a judge who was not their competent judge, beside the ad hoc commission of twenty-four personal enemies that beheaded the Republic's own chief minister thirty-eight years later. The Union's promise that the provinces would be as one province, beside the clause in the same sentence saving every privilege that made them separate. The Synod of Dort's complete apparatus for forming a nation's children, beside the sentence in which it can only request that the magistrate appoint the schoolmaster.

But this case forced a refinement of the method itself, and it is worth flagging in front matter because it recurs. The gap between public and private is not always there. The leading grievance in the manifesto of 1581 — that the new bishops would take the first votes in the assembly of the States and be the King's creatures — is word for word the motive Granvelle had privately reported to Philip in 1561. Where an order's currency is offices and votes, a complaint about votes needs no disguise, because it is already in a form that order counts as principled. And where an order's extraction runs through a chartered body, there is no private word at all: the concealment is performed by a category in a ledger, and nobody has to lie.

The disciplines

Quotation. Public-domain primary sources are quoted exactly, in the original language with a translation, at the length the argument needs: the resistance clause of the Brabant *Blijde Inkomst* of 1356, the war clause of the Great Privilege of 1477, the opening and the narrowing clause of the Act of Abjuration of 1581, the first and ninth articles of the Union of Utrecht of 1579, the first stanza of the *Wilhelmus*. Modern

copyrighted scholarship is paraphrased, briefly, and credited. All translations from the Dutch are the collaboration's own.

No fabrication. No quotation, date, attribution or figure is invented or reconstructed from memory. What could not be verified is dropped or flagged, never guessed — and this study flags a great deal. A striking line attributed to the dike engineer Andries Vierlingh was dropped rather than quoted because it could be found only in one modernised secondary rendering. The words attributed to Marretje Arents at her hanging in 1748 are reported as a chronicler's account rather than as her speech. Granvelle's private explanation of the nobles' motives reaches this study through Motley and is stated as such. Where a translation stands between the collaboration and an original, the chain is named on the page.

Ranges, not numbers. Contested figures are given as spans and the reason for the span is stated. This case has a great many: the dead of the All Saints' Flood of 1570, which the Dutch reference literature itself warns rests on rough estimates and runs from two thousand to twenty-five thousand; the whole of the Banda accounting, whose sources do not reconcile with one another; the death toll of Alba's governorship, for which this study gives no total at all and explains why; the confessional composition of the Republic's population; and two published series for Holland's revenue growth that plainly do not measure the same thing and are recorded as irreconcilable rather than averaged.

Gravity without partisanship. Suffering is held with gravity and the study refuses both flattery and demonisation. Its watchword is that legibility is not pardon: to understand how a thing was done is not to forgive its being done. Equally, naming an origin as built is not a debunking — an order absorbed until it feels like the shape of the world has become genuinely real, and the men defending it are not dupes.

Contribution. Every module returns a refinement to the framework, stated plainly in its closing section, rather than merely applying the framework to the case.

Held as tested, not revealed. The pattern is treated as something discovered and tested against the evidence, not handed down as doctrine — a tendency, never a law, corrected wherever the record refuses it.

What the Dutch Republic added to the framework

Because this is the collection's only order founded by defection rather than conquest, its clearest case of a hold purchased by benefit rather than installed by belief, and its first case of a chartered body holding the frontier, it isolated several mechanisms the conquest cases obscure.

Chief among the refinements: that a floor acquired by defection is bought unit by unit and inherits a veto from each defector, immediately, as a receipt rather than a doctrine — and that the mechanism of an order's founding is therefore the template of its ending, because the internal floor that would prevent a second defection is the one thing such an order can never build. That where a settlement distributes offices rather than estates, the beneficiary's stake is not a possession but the continued existence of the body that appoints him, which binds him far more tightly than land and turns every subsequent crisis into a contest over occupancy rather than property. That the strength of a default is a function of the *number* of distinct benefit streams each member draws rather than of their size, so that a man holding six small ones is unpurchaseable where a man holding one large one is not. That a body of formal equals generates an informal centre wherever its correspondence converges, and periodically destroys the man at that desk without dispersing the convergence. That depth of naturalisation is a property of layers rather than of orders, so that a rebel always appeals to a layer that has become furniture and attacks one that is still visibly a decision. That where an order privileges one formation without being able to compel it and forbids none, the population neither converges nor stays blank but sorts into parallel formation-communities whose boundaries become the constitution — and that a crowded seam at the level of a society is entirely compatible with a captured seam inside every household in it. That where an order cannot prevent publication it polices audience instead, and its instrument is language, so a censorship regime is measured not by what it banned but by which language it banned it in. That the disguise in an extraction tracks the presence of an accounting relationship rather than of a conscience — those owed no account are taken from in the open, and those who must be shown a balance are shown a category. That jurisdictional competition supplies liberty only on questions where the jurisdictions compete, and on questions where they concur supplies the completest foreclosure available, because there is no elsewhere. That a liberty asserted as a grievance against a former ruler is a complaint until some body acquires the standing and the interest to enforce it against the present one, and a deposition creates no such body. That the residue of a factional fight is the portion of the third party's demand that also suits the winner. That where a population's formation attaches it to the apex rather than the counter-elite, the counter-elite cannot swing it and must import its army. And that where an order manufactured its own ground, the metabolic note is not called at the end but serviced continuously, escalating without notice, and must always be read against whatever else that generation's treasury had already promised.

The arc

A landscape opening and twelve modules, each with a framework function and its own evocative title.

Landscape — the two societies on the eve. *The Spade in the Dike.* A country that had to be manufactured under contract before anyone could live on it, whose manufacture created a coordination problem no lord could solve, and a dynasty assembled in four generations that had to buy its recognition at every accession with a charter containing a clause releasing the subjects from obedience.

1 — The Floor of Force. *The Garrison Had Gone to Utrecht.* How six hundred men took two provinces in ten weeks by arriving where a faction inside was ready to open; what both sides then did at Gorinchem, Zutphen, Naarden and Haarlem; and how the arrangement was finally secured by cutting the dikes five centuries of labour had built, over the objection of the people who built them.

2 — The Settlement. *As If They Were But One Province.* A treaty that binds seven provinces into one and in the same sentence guarantees every privilege each holds against the others; a Church estate not sold to a new gentry but sequestered as an income; and a winning class that received no land at all, only offices.

3 — The Robe. *Principally in These Lands.* A manifesto whose famous universalist opening is narrowed four sentences later to the oath sworn at a Brabant inauguration; a deposition that installs a French Catholic duke in the same document; and a constitutional history eight hundred years long, written in the year the last foreign prince gave up.

4 — Formation. *The Magistracy Shall Be Requested.* A church that designed a complete apparatus for installing the cast of the world in a child and then had to ask the town councils to staff it; a Catholic third formed instead by an exiled bishop and a hundred and forty women teaching catechism in kitchens; and a union that could not agree what day it was for a hundred and eighteen years.

5 — The Cost Column. *My Hand Is Stern, But My Heart Is Kind.* Why an ordinary man complied, asked separately of the Leiden weaver with the best wage in Europe, the Brabant peasant taxed by an assembly he could not enter, the German boy who signed away two years' pay before he saw a ship, and the Bandanese, for whom the question did not arise.

6 — Extraction. *Entered as a Purchase.* The heaviest indirect taxes in Europe, laid on beer, grain, salt and peat, published openly and servicing a debt held by the men who voted them; and, at the other end, a compulsory delivery at a price the buyer set, which entered the Amsterdam books as the cost of goods sold.

7 — Information and Suppression. *From Italy, Germany, and Elsewhere.* A state with no pre-publication licence anywhere, which printed the books every other country burned and imprisoned a man for writing in Dutch what his friends wrote safely in Latin — and which kept one set of accounts closed for a hundred and ninety-seven years without a breach.

8 — Elite Coordination and the Default. *The Same Man in Four Chairs.* How a constitution designed to make decision impossible produced eighty years of war and two centuries without a default; why men who loathed each other went on holding it up; and what changed when prosperous men who drew nothing from it began buying their own muskets.

9 — Plurality or Foreclosure. *Not His Competent Judge.* A country that listed among its capital charges against a king that he had tried great men before judges who were not their lawful ones, and beheaded its own first minister after a trial by twenty-four of his enemies — and what actually protected an ordinary Dutchman, which was not a right.

10 — Change and Collapse. *The Rivers Froze.* An order that ran all four cracks in sequence, fractured so badly that a Prussian army had to close the split, and ended in a fortnight when the water that had been its floor turned solid; and the discovery that the towns went over in 1795 by precisely the mechanism that had brought them in during 1572.

11 — The Grim Accounting. *Three Hundred Thousand, and Never Fifty.* What an order that killed remarkably few of its own people at home cost in the two hemispheres where it did its dying; a metabolic note serviced in instalments by flood, murrain and a mollusc that ate the sea defences; and why a country remembered Naarden for four centuries and did not remember Banda at all.

12 — Convergence and Divergence. *The Same Men, the Same Decade.* The Dutch Republic placed among the orders that acquire a floor without a battle; and the strongest case for the defence, stated in full and answered without flinching — including the argument that this was, by any standard available in its own century, the best place in the world to be an ordinary person.

A note on sources.

This front matter is descriptive and makes no primary-source claim of its own; every quotation, date and figure it refers to is sourced and caveated in the module where it appears, and the closing note of each module states what that module could and could not verify.

Two defects should be declared in front rather than left in the body. The Synod of Dort's decree on catechesis, from which the fourth module takes its title, reaches this study only through the standard English translation of the Church Order; it could not be verified against the Latin or Dutch original and is reported rather than quoted. And the estimate that something over forty per cent of the Republic's population belonged to churches other than the public one rests on a single modern summary rather than an audited count, varies sharply by province and by date, and carries real weight in the modules on the default, on liberty and on collapse; a reader minded to check one figure in this study should check that one.

A third limitation is structural. The study was built in English against sources available in English and Dutch on the open web, and it has not consulted the archives of the East India Company, the resolutions of the States of Holland, or the Company's pay ledgers directly. Where a figure derives from those bodies it derives from the modern scholarship that has worked through them, and is credited to that scholarship rather than to the record.

Part of the collection Patterns of Power. *Tested, never revealed.*

LANDSCAPE

The Spade in the Dike

The ground before the Revolt — a country that had to be manufactured before anyone could live on it, whose manufacture created a coordination problem no lord could solve and so obliged him to license his own subjects to tax, legislate for and judge one another; and a dynasty assembled in four generations by marriage and purchase, which had to buy its recognition at every accession with a written charter containing a clause releasing the subjects from obedience — set out here so that what happened after 1566 can be read as a position rather than as a birth.

What a conquest falls on, when the conquest is domestic

Every study in this collection opens by reconstructing the ground, because a conquest performed on empty scenery is not a conquest but a founding myth, and because what a conqueror finds already standing decides most of what he can afford to do next. This case makes that opening harder in an instructive way, because the conquest to come is not a foreign army landing on a strange coast. It is a faction of the country seizing the country: a few thousand exiles, privateers and German mercenaries taking the walled towns of two provinces between April and July of 1572, and a set of magistrates being replaced by other magistrates who were, in most towns, their neighbours. There is no arriving stranger whose ignorance of the ground can be measured against what the ground actually was.

So the reconstruction has to be done differently. What must be established is not what a foreigner failed to understand but what the men who made the rising already possessed — the institutions they would keep, the instruments they would reach for, the arithmetic that was in front of them, and the specific things about their country that made the arrangement they built the cheapest one available rather than the noblest one imaginable. Almost everything the Republic later became was standing in the ground before 1572. The water boards were three centuries old. The towns already governed themselves by co-optation. The provincial assembly already required its delegates to refer back to the towns that sent them before agreeing to anything. The country already imported its bread. The charter clause the rebels would use to justify deposing a king had been written in 1356 and sworn to by every subsequent ruler of Brabant.

Two further things need saying at the outset, because they organise what follows.

The first is that this ground is not natural. Most of the country under discussion did not exist as habitable land before about the year 1000, and the terms on which it was manufactured — recorded in contracts, some of which survive — set the shape of the society that grew on it. That is unusual enough to be worth stating plainly: the collection has had orders built on river valleys, steppes, plateaus and coasts, but never one built on ground that was itself a legal instrument.

The second is that the order the rebels rose against was, by the standards of this collection, extremely young. The Catholic Church in the Netherlands was eight hundred years old and had long since become the shape of the world. The county of Holland was six hundred years old. The privileges of the towns were three or four centuries old. But the *Netherlands* — the thing with seventeen provinces, one prince, one supreme court at Mechelen and a States General — had been assembled between 1384 and 1543, and given its legal form as a single indivisible object in 1548 and 1549. Men alive in 1566 had fathers who remembered Guelders being conquered. This layering matters more than anything else in the opening, and the closing section returns to it.

A country made under contract

Begin with the ground, because it was made, and the making is documented.

The western Netherlands in the early Middle Ages was a low peat bog behind a line of dunes, waterlogged, uninhabitable except along the natural levees of the rivers, and worth so little that the Emperor could grant it away as wilderness. That grant is the beginning. Under the *wildernisregaal* — the sovereign's right over unclaimed waste — the counts of Holland and the bishops of Utrecht held the marsh, and from about the tenth century they set about turning it into revenue. They could not do it themselves. The work was arduous, unhealthy and slow; it required people who did not yet live there; and the returns arrived a generation after the labour. So they contracted it out.

The instrument was the *cope*, a private agreement between the lord and a group of settlers, often through an intermediary who put up capital and took the risk — a *locator*, whose name is fossilised in villages still called Boskoop, Reeuwijk's neighbours, Hei- en Boeicop after two undertakers named Hey and Boey who took blocks of wilderness from the bishop of Utrecht in the early twelfth century. The terms were standardised to a degree that still shows from the air. A holding was one *hoeve*: a strip about thirty rods wide and six *voorling* deep, which is to say roughly 110 metres by 1,250 metres, about sixteen *morgen* or fourteen hectares — a farm on which a family could live. The colonist dug the parallel ditches that drained his strip, threw up a rear dike at the far end to keep the water of the undrained bog behind him from running

back in, built his house at the front on the road, and at the end of the process held the land.

Held it, and this is the operative fact, in something close to full ownership: freedom of person, a fixed annual rent, and the tithe. Not a tenancy at the lord's pleasure, not a servile holding, not a share in a collective patrimony that could not be sold. A thing, alienable, and his.

It is tempting to read that as an early flowering of liberty, and it was not. It was a bid. The lord had a great deal of land and no people; the people had their labour and could take it elsewhere, because half a dozen other lords were opening bogs on the same terms and Frisian and Flemish colonists were being recruited as far away as the lower Weser and Elbe, where the Dutch settlement law travelled under the name *Hollerrecht*. Where land is abundant and labour scarce, a land-taking order bids for population instead of clearing it, and the price it pays is stated in the contract. The colonists were frequently unfree men when they started; personal freedom was part of the consideration. The bargain was legible on both sides, and it was struck for reasons neither party would have called ideals: the lord got tithes, rents, and — the sources are explicit about this — new communities that supplied fighting men; the colonist got a farm and the end of servility.

What the bargain produced, over three centuries, was a countryside without serfdom in the province that would later dominate the Republic, populated by smallholders holding alienable land, in a legal environment where land was already a commodity before anyone needed to make it one. The framework's usual first question of a settlement — what did the instrument convert, a relation into a thing? — has an odd answer here. Nothing was converted. The land was born as a thing, because it was born as a contract, and there was no prior lineage right or collective patrimony standing on it to be dissolved. That absence will matter enormously later, and it is the reason the Dutch case cannot be read as a straightforward instance of the settlement technologies this collection has documented elsewhere.

The design flaw

The contract had a defect that nobody involved could have seen, and it did not become visible for two generations.

Drained peat oxidises and compacts. Land that has been dug and ditched sinks, at something on the order of a metre a century, and it goes on sinking for as long as it stays drained. Within a lifetime or two of the first colonists, the strips their grandfathers had raised above the water were level with it; within another, below it. The ditches that had carried water away began to carry it in. The rivers, which had once been lower than

the fields, were now higher, running between their own silted banks above a countryside that had subsided beneath them.

This is the single most consequential fact about the Dutch Republic, and it is a fact about soil chemistry.

It produced three consequences in order. The first was that the drainage works could never stop. A dike, once built, must be maintained forever, and raised, and then supplemented by an interior ring, and eventually by a mill to lift water over it, because the land behind it is still going down. Coordination that would elsewhere be occasional became permanent and escalating — an obligation that could not be discharged and passed to every subsequent generation as a standing charge on the ground itself. The second was that the sinking land grew steadily worse for grain. Wet, cold, acid soils will not carry a reliable cereal crop, and by the fifteenth century much of Holland's arable had gone over to grass, to cattle and dairying, and to industrial crops — hemp, flax, madder, hops. The third followed from the second: a country that cannot grow its bread must buy it, and to buy it must sell something, and to sell something must go to sea.

The Dutch did not choose the maritime economy over the agrarian one. The ground went out from under the agrarian one, and the maritime economy was what was left.

A jurisdiction the count could not keep

The permanent obligation had to be administered by somebody, and the arrangement that grew up to do it is the oldest institution in this study.

The oldest document is a very small piece of parchment. On 11 October 1255, at Leiden, Count William II of Holland — at that moment also King of the Romans — had a short text written in Latin and sealed, declaring that no lock would be built at Spaarndam and no works undertaken at that dam or at three other named installations, the little dike called the Zijdwinde, the sea dike along the IJ, and the Zwammerdam in the Old Rhine, without consulting the *heemraden* then in office or thereafter. It is the oldest item in the archive of the water board of Rijnland, and it is not a foundation charter. It confirms the powers of a body that plainly already existed. The occasion is recoverable and it is entirely characteristic: in 1253 the count had decided to build a lock at Spaarndam for the benefit of shipping without consulting the men responsible for the dam, and the charter of 1255 is the undertaking that he would not do that again.

So the *heemraden* were older than the document but not older than the count: local men whose competence the count formalised, and the formalisation was a concession

extracted at a moment when he had annoyed them. What he conceded, however, was very large, and it grew. The dike-reeve and high dike-wardens of Rijnland held two powers that in most European orders belong to a sovereign and to nobody else. They could issue *keuren* — binding ordinances — and they could try and fine those who broke them. They rode the *schouw*, the formal inspection, and their judgments were enforceable. By the end of the Middle Ages Rijnland had become a supervisory authority over the lesser drainage bodies beneath it, the parish-level *ambachten* and the polders, so that a hierarchy of jurisdiction existed in the countryside which ran parallel to the count's own and was not his.

The mechanism underneath is the interesting part, and it is ordinary position logic rather than anything mystical. The count could not perform this work, could not pay for it, and — decisively — could not supervise it, because knowing whether a given stretch of dike was sound in a given month required standing on it. The knowledge was distributed across the people who lived on the ground and could not be gathered into a chancery. So the obligation was attached to the land itself. Under *verhoefslaging*, each holding was assigned a named stretch of dike to maintain; in some districts, notably around Muiden and Naarden, the assignment ran by *hoofdbreedte*, the frontage of your own parcel, which meant that a farmer with a wide strip paid more than one with a narrow strip and a farmer half a mile inland — who would drown just as thoroughly if the dike failed — paid nothing at all. A dike inspection made in North Holland in 1567, one year before the Revolt began, records exactly this arrangement in the Muider and Naarder bans, and records that no redistribution of the burden had ever been made.

And at the bottom of the arrangement sat the instrument this module takes its name from. A man who could not maintain his stretch of dike had one lawful way out. He went to his section and stuck his spade in it — *spasteking*, the sticking of the spade — and by that act declared that he could not perform, and forfeited not merely the parcel that carried the obligation but everything he held in the polder. Then the burden fell back to his kin, to previous owners of the parcel, and finally to the lord, but never to the other landholders in common.

Hold that image, because the same shape is about to appear at the top of the society, in a charter, in Latin-adjacent Middle Dutch, about a duke.

Whether this is the origin of the consultative habit cannot be proved and should not be claimed. What can be said, and is worth more, is structural. Here is a permanent, technically specific, physically distributed coordination task which the apex could neither perform nor supervise, and which he therefore had to delegate with real jurisdiction attached — the power to make rules and to punish. A tax farm can be

resumed; a delegated jurisdiction of this kind cannot, because resuming it would mean doing the work, and the work is holding back the sea forever. The count of Holland licensed a set of his subjects to tax, legislate for and judge one another, in perpetuity, over the one question on which every landholder's survival depended, and no subsequent ruler of that ground ever got it back. Whatever else that is, it is a very old and very deep instance of a power moved rather than destroyed, and the men who sat on those boards were, generation after generation, the same landholding families who sat in the town councils.

What the sinking country had to become

By 1500 the consequences had compounded into an economy with no European parallel, and the numbers are worth setting down because they are startling in a specific direction.

In 1514 the county of Holland held something on the order of 268,000 people. Flanders, to the south, held perhaps 750,000 and Brabant 413,000; the Low Countries as a whole are usually put at around 2.4 million in the later fifteenth century. Holland was, in short, a small province. But roughly forty-five per cent of its people lived in towns — a proportion no other region in Europe approached — and its largest town, Leiden, held about fourteen thousand souls. This is the fact that undoes most intuitions about the place. Holland was not a great city with a hinterland. It was a country of small towns, more than thirty of them, none of them large, in which nearly half the population did not farm.

They did not farm because they could not, and they ate because ships brought grain. The Baltic trade the Dutch called the *moedernegotie*, the mother of all trades, is not a Golden Age invention; the earliest surviving Danish Sound Toll registers, of 1497 and 1503, already show Dutch shipping dominant in it. Between about 1500 and 1567 the carrying capacity of the merchant fleet is estimated to have risen from some 19,000 lasts to some 80,000, and Baltic grain imports from around 10,000 lasts to around 60,000. The exchange ran in both directions and the outbound half was salt, wine, cloth, and above all herring, caught and gutted and salted at sea aboard the *buis*, a vessel designed for the purpose, which is what allowed the fishery to work distant grounds. The settlement made with Denmark in 1544 secured Holland's access to the Sound on terms the scholarship describes as an exemption from the toll — a diplomatic result obtained by the Habsburg crown and pocketed by Holland's shippers.

The fuel was underfoot, and taking it destroyed the ground. Wood was scarce; peat was not, and dried peat — turf — heated the salt pans that cured the herring, the brick kilns, the bleach fields at Haarlem, the potteries at Delft, and above all the breweries,

which were among the largest industrial enterprises in the country. But cutting peat below the water table converts land into water permanently. Over the early modern centuries, on the standard estimates, peat extraction turned more than sixty thousand hectares of Holland and Utrecht — something near a tenth of their surface — into lakes, swallowing villages whole and eventually merging the Haarlemmermeer and the Leidsemeer into an inland sea of some seventeen thousand hectares that the neighbouring towns came to call the water wolf. The authorities understood exactly what was happening and legislated against it in the sixteenth century, restricting extraction below the water table and prohibiting export, because they could see their tax base dissolving. They failed. Digging was worth more than farming, and a placard nailed to a church door does not change the arithmetic in a peat-digger's household.

That failure is a small but exact reading of the floor in this country before the Revolt. The prince could forbid, and the forbidding did not bite, because the men who would have had to enforce it were the local landholders whose own tenants were doing the digging.

Two further features of that countryside deserve recording because they contradict the usual picture of a pre-industrial society. Land in Holland was traded, and by the mid-sixteenth century a large share of it had passed into the hands of townsmen — burghers and urban institutions — who leased it out on short competitive terms rather than working it, so that by the seventeenth century the overwhelming majority of burgher-owned land was leasehold. And the rural population, unable to live from arable, worked for wages a great deal of the time: in fishing, shipping, peat, brick, textiles put out from the towns. A countryside of freeholders who are also wage-labourers, farming for the market, buying their bread, in a province that is half urban, is not a feudal landscape at all, and the old nobility of Holland was correspondingly thin — a small group of leading families, often men who held office under the count, representing a nobility that in economic weight barely existed.

A faith that had been brought

The order that gave every person in this country his calendar, his oaths, his charity, his schooling and his account of what he was had arrived from outside, by conquest, eight hundred years earlier — and by 1500 no one experienced it as an import, which is exactly the point.

Christianity came to Frisia with Frankish arms behind it. Earlier attempts had failed in the Frisian-Frankish wars; the systematic mission began in 690 with the Northumbrian Willibrord, who was consecrated bishop of the Frisians at Rome in 695 and settled at Utrecht with the consent of the Frankish mayor of the palace, building

the churches of the Saviour and of St Martin. Boniface, who followed, was killed by Frisians at Dokkum on 5 June 754. The conversion was slow and it was not gentle, and by roughly 800 the Low Countries were Christian. Utrecht became the great northern see and a suffragan of Cologne; over the ninth to eleventh centuries its bishops accumulated temporal power and land until the bishopric was a principality.

Seven centuries later that origin was invisible. The parish year, the saints' days that scored the working calendar, the oath a schepen swore, the guild that buried its members, the bequest that endowed an almshouse — none of it presented itself to a Haarlem weaver as the residue of a Frankish conquest, any more than the tide presents itself to a fisherman as a decision. It was the shape of the world. Saying that it began as somebody else's conquest is not a way of taking it away from the people who held it; it is the opposite. A thing that was built and then became genuinely real is more durable than any lie, and it was authentically theirs. But the dating matters, because the whole of what follows in this study turns on how deep various layers of this order had been driven, and the Church had been driven all the way down.

Two structural features of that Church in the northern provinces need recording now. First, its wealth was very large and very visible: abbeys, chapters, hospitals, and a great deal of land, some of it the best-managed in the country. Second — and this is easy to miss and hard to overstate — the clergy did not sit in the States of Holland. The provincial assembly of the province that would run the Republic consisted of the nobility and the towns, and no clerical estate. When the moment came to dispose of ecclesiastical property, there would be no bench of abbots in the chamber to object.

Seventeen provinces, assembled in four generations

The state was newer than almost anything in it, and it was assembled the way a merchant assembles a portfolio.

Flanders and Artois came to the Valois dukes of Burgundy by marriage in 1384. Namur was bought in 1421 from a count who had run into debt. Brabant and Limburg were inherited in 1430. Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland were taken from Jacoba of Bavaria by a mixture of war and pressure, the Reconciliation of Delft of 1428 making Philip the Good governor and heir and Jacoba abdicating in 1433. Luxembourg was purchased from a childless duchess in 1443. Guelders was annexed by Charles the Bold in 1473. Then the whole thing passed to the Habsburgs with Mary of Burgundy's marriage to Maximilian in 1477, and Charles V completed it: Friesland acquired in 1524, the temporal lordship of Utrecht and Overijssel in 1528, Groningen in 1536, Guelders finally in 1543.

Nothing about that list is a nation. It is a set of separate principalities, with separate laws, separate courts, separate coinages, separate estates and separate languages, held together by the accident that one man held all the titles. The dukes worked hard to make it more than that, and the instrument they used was an assembly. The first States General met at Bruges from 9 January to 12 February 1464 — the first occasion on which delegates from the constituent territories, each of which already had its own provincial estates, were brought into one room. It was summoned to make the prince's business easier. It became, within a century and a half, the body that deposed his great-great-grandson.

Charles V finished the legal construction in two acts. The Transaction of Augsburg of 26 June 1548 gathered the Habsburg Low Countries into the Burgundian Circle of the Empire, exempt in practice from imperial taxes, courts and diets, in exchange for an annual contribution — which is to say it detached them from the Empire while nominally keeping them inside it. The Pragmatic Sanction of 4 November 1549, negotiated with the States General and ratified province by province over the following two years, harmonised the succession law across all seventeen provinces and declared them a single indivisible inheritance passing whole to one heir, beginning with his son Philip.

Read that pair as the framework reads any legal instrument, and what they performed is plain. They converted a personal union of seventeen separate relations into one thing. Before 1549 a man in Leiden owed obedience to the count of Holland, who happened also to be duke of Brabant and lord of Friesland; after 1549 he was a subject of the Netherlands, an object that had not previously existed and that the instrument itself created in the act of reporting it. The Habsburgs manufactured the country. Twenty years later, men who had been made Netherlanders by an imperial edict would rebel in the name of the Netherlands, and the name was the edict's.

The price of every accession

Against that construction stood a set of written instruments, and they all have the same structure, and the structure is a reading of who held force at a particular moment.

The oldest and most famous is the *Blijde Inkomst* of Brabant, sealed at Leuven on 3 January 1356. Its occasion was a contested succession: the duke had died leaving three daughters and three ambitious sons-in-law, and the towns and nobility of Brabant, Limburg and the Overmaas lands leagued together and presented the couple they preferred with a schedule of demands as the price of recognition. The thirty-four articles confirmed existing privileges, forbade the duke to make war without the consent of the towns, forbade him to divide the duchy, barred foreigners from office

and required that important posts go to native Brabanters, prevented him from selling or pledging land without consent, and granted merchants free movement throughout Brabant and Limburg. And then it closed with this:

> *Ende ware dat sake dat wij onse hoir ocht onse nacomelinghe jeghen enighen van desen voirs[creven] pointen, articulen ende vestecheiden ghinghen, daden ochte daden doen, In al ocht in deele, hoe ende in wat manieren dat dat ware, soe consenteren wij ende willecoiren onsen voirs[eiden] goeden lieden, dat si ons noch onsen hoir, noch onsen nacomelingen nemmermeer negheenen dienst doen en selen noch onderhorech sijn toetter tijt dat wij hen dat weder daen hadden ende afghelaten volcomelic.*

And should it come about that we, our heirs or our successors act against any of these aforesaid points, articles and settled undertakings, or do so, or cause them to be done, in whole or in part, in whatever manner and by whatever means, then we consent and agree with our said good people that they shall never again do us, nor our heirs, nor our successors any service, nor be subject to us, until such time as we have fully made it good to them and wholly desisted.

That is a man sticking his spade in the dike, written from the other side. The duke declares in advance the conditions under which his own subjects may lawfully walk away, and the declaration is in his own mouth, sealed with his own seal, which is precisely what makes it usable two centuries later.

Now the part that is usually left out, and which the framework insists on. The charter was a dead letter within six months. Louis of Male invaded that summer, Brussels and Leuven pragmatically recognised him as duke, and the towns' breach of their oath destroyed the instrument's validity; the Leuven charter was formally cancelled in 1361 along with other privileges deemed void. And yet every subsequent duke of Brabant, from Anthony of Burgundy in 1406 through to Francis II in 1792, swore to a *Blijde Inkomst* at his inauguration, the text renegotiated at each accession down to 1549 and stable thereafter.

That combination is the finding. The clause did not survive because it was legally robust — it was destroyed almost immediately. It survived because the *position* recurred: every new ruler of Brabant arrived needing recognition from towns that could refuse him money, and every one of them therefore paid the same price. A written right of resistance is not a statement about ideas. It is a report on the distribution of force at the moment of an accession, and it is reissued whenever that distribution recurs.

The proof is the next instance. Charles the Bold froze to death outside Nancy on 5 January 1477, leaving a daughter of nineteen and a state at war with France. Within weeks the States General had extracted from Mary of Burgundy the Great Privilege of 11 February 1477, with a separate and more extensive charter for Flanders the same day and another for Holland and Zeeland on 14 March. The States General might henceforth assemble on their own authority; no war might be declared without them; the Parlement of Mechelen was abolished; officials must be natives who spoke the language and respected the law of the province. The clause reappears, this time attached specifically to war:

> *item, dat wy noch onse naecommers, princen oft princessen van de vorsz. lande negheen orloghe in anlegghers oft verweerers stede an zullen moghen annemen, wy oft zy, en zullen eerst de Staten van allen onsen landen daerup bescriven ende daerinne doen bi ghemeener conclusie ende overdraghe; ende ofte wy of onse nacommers anderseins eenighe orloghe annamen, dat in dien ghevalle onse leenmannen oft ondersaten ons noch onsen vorsz. nacommers niet sculdich en zullen zijn te dienene*

item, that neither we nor our successors, princes or princesses of the said lands, may undertake any war, whether as aggressor or as defender, we or they, without first summoning the States of all our lands upon it and proceeding therein by common resolution and agreement; and if we or our successors should undertake any war otherwise, that in that case our vassals and subjects shall not be bound to serve us nor our said successors.

The instruments differ in their particulars and are identical in their logic. And the sequel is identical too: Mary married Maximilian in August 1477, Maximilian detested the privileges, and they were progressively undone. Holland and Zeeland's own charter was being hollowed out by an administrative instruction before the year was over.

So the pattern across two centuries is: weak accession, charter bought; strong ruler, charter taken back; text survives to be bought again. The Netherlands did not have a constitution. It had a price list, renegotiated at each succession, whose most quoted clause was a description of what the towns could do if pushed. In 1581 the men who deposed Philip II would not need to invent a doctrine. They would need to find a copy.

Who actually governed, and how little of the year they spent doing it

Below the charters, the machinery was small, local and closed, and its shape in 1560 is the shape the Republic kept.

A town in Holland was governed by a council — a *vroedschap* — which filled its own vacancies by co-optation from among the families that already sat on it, and by magistrates, the burgomasters and the *schepenen* who were also the town's bench of judges, chosen annually, in most towns from a double list presented to the count's officer. The count's own man, the *schout*, prosecuted and kept order. The result was an oligarchy of perhaps a few dozen families in each town, self-perpetuating, in which the prince retained a formal role in the annual appointment of magistrates from candidates the town itself had nominated. That role is the hinge on which a great deal in this study will turn, because it is exactly the point at which a ruler could, if he dared, reach into a town and change its government — and exactly the point the rebels of 1572 seized.

Above the towns sat the States of Holland, and before 1572 they were not a parliament in any sense. They were an advisory college of the count, summoned by him, meeting irregularly, and concerned overwhelmingly with taxation. Their membership was the Ridderschap — the nobility, casting a single collective vote and understood to represent the countryside — and the six great towns, Dordrecht, Haarlem, Delft, Leiden, Amsterdam and Gouda, each with one vote, voting in that fixed order after the nobility. There was no clerical bench. In the fifteenth century the smaller towns and even villages had sometimes been consulted; the practice faded, and after 1477 the six consolidated their position as the province's voice, which is to say that the assembly narrowed at precisely the moment its powers were being written down.

And the delegates could not decide anything. They voted under instruction from the bodies that sent them, and where they had no instruction they had to go back and get one — *ruggespraak*, referring back, already the settled practice long before the Republic existed. The assembly sat around sixty days a year. After 1572 it would sit more than two hundred.

It is worth pausing on how that apparatus looks from the prince's side, because it explains almost everything he did next. To raise a tax in Holland, Philip II had to ask an assembly of six towns and a handful of noblemen, whose delegates could not agree without going home first, which met when he called it, and whose consent had been established since 1356 in Brabant and confirmed in one instrument after another as a condition of his own legitimacy. To govern those towns he had to appoint magistrates from lists the towns drew up. To enforce a religious policy he had to work through

schepenen who were the accused's neighbours. He held the floor of force in the abstract; he did not hold the machinery through which force is applied to a particular householder in a particular street, and he never had.

The two demands that could not be met

By the 1550s that machinery was being asked for two things it was not built to deliver, and the character of the resistance to each is the last thing this opening has to establish.

The first was money. Charles V's wars were fought largely on Netherlandish credit, and the demands on the provinces rose through his reign and did not stop when he abdicated in October 1555. The States had a real weapon here and used it — when they refused funds, the Spanish veterans left, embarking in January 1561 for the Mediterranean — but the weapon was defensive. It could stop things; it could not govern.

The second was religion, and the instruments were the placards. From 1523 the Netherlands executed people for heresy, and the legislation grew steadily harder — a stiffening in 1529, savage corporal penalties for printers and writers in 1531, an order in 1540 that the penalties in earlier placards be actually imposed and that judges cease mitigating them. The culmination was the edict of 29 April 1550, which the population called the Blood Placard: death for proven heresy in all cases, men and women alike, with the manner varying by whether the accused recanted; and a comprehensive prohibition on printing, writing, distributing, selling, buying or possessing heretical books and images, on attending heretical gatherings, on preaching, and on harbouring the new believers. On the Dutch scholarship's own assessment, nowhere in Europe was heresy legislation as severe.

Now attend to what happened to it, because it is the single most revealing episode in this opening. The edict met resistance — most sharply in the Brabant towns — and had to be reissued on 25 September 1550 with concessions. The objection that carried was not about conscience. It was that the edict required local authorities to admit inquisitors and required immigrants to produce a certificate of orthodoxy, and Antwerp, then the greatest commercial city in northern Europe, could not run a trade on those terms. The towns fought the heresy law with the privilege clause and the ledger, and they won a partial retreat.

They did not win it for the accused. Documented executions for heresy in the Netherlands between 1523 and 1566 exceed thirteen hundred, distributed fairly evenly between the northern and southern provinces, and the true figure is certainly higher, since the record is incomplete; much larger numbers circulating in older Protestant

martyrology and in some nineteenth-century accounts — figures in the tens of thousands and above — are not supported by the archival work and should be treated as polemic rather than evidence. The honest statement is that at least thirteen hundred people were killed for their beliefs under a legal regime that the towns objected to chiefly on the ground that it was bad for business.

The last instrument arrived in 1559. Until then the seventeen provinces contained only four dioceses, all under foreign metropolitans — Utrecht under Cologne, the others under Reims — and much of the country under the jurisdiction of bishops in Liège, Trier and elsewhere. On 12 May 1559 the bull *Super Universas*, obtained by Philip II from Paul IV, raised Utrecht and Cambrai to archbishoprics, created Mechelen a third, and erected fourteen new sees, Utrecht taking Haarlem, Deventer, Middelburg, Groningen and Leeuwarden as suffragans. As an ecclesiastical measure it corrected a genuine absurdity. As a political measure it did two things at once. The new sees had to be endowed, and were endowed by incorporating the richest abbeys, so that the new bishop became abbot in the abbot's place — and in provinces where the abbeys held a vote in the estates, that vote would now be cast by a man the king had nominated.

What makes this episode diagnostic is that the private reasoning survives. Cardinal Granvelle, the king's chief minister in Brussels and himself the new archbishop of Mechelen, wrote to Philip explaining why the great nobles opposed the scheme, and his account, preserved in his correspondence and reported by the nineteenth-century editors who worked through it, gives them two motives: to demonstrate that the king could do nothing without their permission, and — because in the assembly of the estates they were at that moment masters of the field — because they did not want anyone placed above the abbots, whom they could frighten into voting as they wished. Granvelle further predicted the public argument the lords would make: that incorporating the Brabant abbeys was contrary to the Joyous Entry.

Set the two beside each other and the method of this whole study is on display. The public objection, made by the Prince of Orange and the Marquis of Bergen, is constitutional and impeccable: the charter of 1356 forbids it. The private explanation, written by the minister who knew them best, is that the lords controlled the abbots' votes and did not intend to lose them. Both may be sincere; men are quite capable of holding a principle that happens to protect their position, and the framework does not require a choice. What it requires is that both be on the page. The clause of 1356 was a real constraint — it had to be answered, Philip had to consult universities and canonists about it — and it was also, in this instance, the available weapon for a fight about seats in a chamber.

By 1566 the position was this. A composite state four generations old, made legally single seventeen years earlier by an edict, ruled by an absent king, was attempting to enforce Europe's harshest heresy law and to reorganise the Church through a hierarchy the great nobles read as a device for packing the estates, over a country that was half urban, fed from the Baltic, governed street by street by co-opted magistrates the crown did not appoint, drained by boards the crown did not control, and in possession of a set of sworn charters stating in the ruler's own words the conditions under which his subjects owed him nothing.

What happened next is the business of the module that follows. It is enough here to say that when it happened, nobody had to invent anything.

Reading the ground against the framework

Three things follow from this reconstruction, and the third is the contribution.

The first concerns the drainage jurisdiction, and it is a mechanism rather than a romance. The *heemraden* of 1255 were not an ancient stateless institution older than any sovereign; they were confirmed by a count, in a charter that is a concession he made after annoying them. But what he conceded is structurally unusual and repays a general statement. A coordination task that is permanent, technically specific and physically distributed cannot be supervised from a chancery, so an apex facing one must delegate not merely the work but the jurisdiction — the power to make rules and punish breaches — and having delegated it he cannot resume it, because resumption would mean performing the task himself. The count of Holland was in that position and did that thing, and three centuries later the same families still held the jurisdiction. Enter this on the board as an observation for later modules to test rather than a finding: *a delegated jurisdiction over an unending physical necessity is the least recoverable grant an apex can make, because unlike a tax farm or an office it cannot be taken back without being taken up.*

The second is that a written right of resistance is a report on the distribution of force, and this case supplies a very early instance of one — 1356 — together with the useful detail that the instrument was legally destroyed within months and reissued at every accession for four hundred and thirty-six years anyway. The reissuing is the evidence. The clause recurs because the position recurs: a ruler arriving at a succession, needing recognition from bodies that can withhold money, will pay in the same coin every time, and what he signs is a photograph of that particular morning's balance rather than a statement about the nature of authority. That the Brabant charter was worthless in law by June 1356 and sworn to by an emperor in 1792 is the cleanest demonstration of the point the collection has yet had.

The third concerns naturalisation, and it is the module's contribution.

This project holds that a built order becomes, over generations, the furniture of reality, and that naming a built origin is not debunking. That remains true. But the Dutch ground shows the proposition needs one refinement, because it has so far been applied to orders as wholes, and an order is not a whole. It is a stack of layers laid down at different dates, and each layer has its own age and its own depth of naturalisation, and they can differ enormously within one state at one moment.

In the Netherlands of 1566 the stack ran roughly like this. At the bottom, the parish and the faith: a Frankish conquest of the seventh and eighth centuries, driven so deep over eight hundred years that no living person could experience it as anything but the shape of the world. Above that, the manufactured ground and its drainage jurisdiction: five centuries old, entirely artificial in origin, and by now simply how land worked. Above that, the town privilege and the provincial assembly: three or four centuries old, contested but familiar. And at the top, the thing called the Netherlands: assembled by marriage and purchase between 1384 and 1543 and given its legal existence by an edict in 1549, within the memory of living men's fathers.

That top layer had not taken. And it had not taken not because it was wicked or foreign — Charles V was born in Ghent and spoke the language — but simply because it had not been there long enough for formation to do its work, and because the men it was laid over could still remember it being laid.

Which yields the statement this module offers to the framework. *Depth of naturalisation is a property of layers, not of orders. A state can be ancient at its base and manufactured at its apex, and where that is so, the layers can be turned against each other: a rebel will always appeal to a layer that has fully naturalised and attack a layer that has not, because the naturalised layer supplies him with warrant that needs no defence while the recent one can still be named as a construction.* The men who broke the Habsburg Netherlands did exactly that. They did not attack the Church at first, or the drainage jurisdiction, or the town charter, or the county of Holland. They attacked the newest thing in the building, in the name of the oldest things, using a clause from 1356 — and the reason that worked is that the clause was furniture and the Pragmatic Sanction was not.

It also supplies the diagnostic. When an order is in trouble, look for the seam between a layer that has become reality and a layer that is still visibly a decision, and expect the fracture to run along it.

A note on sources.

Two primary instruments are quoted exactly and at length in the original Middle Dutch with translations that are mine. The resistance clause of the *Blijde Inkomst* of 3 January 1356 is quoted from the text as reproduced from the surviving charters — four are known to survive, one at 's-Hertogenbosch and the others in the National Archives at Brussels — and corresponds to the scholarly edition of the Leuven charter published by Ria van Bragt in the *Standen en Landen* series in 1956; the fragment of the same clause quoted in the rebel pamphlet *Trouwe waerschouwinghe aen de goede mannen van Antwerpen* of 1581 confirms that this was the passage in use during the Revolt. The war clause of the Great Privilege granted by Mary of Burgundy on 14 March 1477 is quoted from the edited text of the charter. The charter of Count William II of 11 October 1255, the oldest item in the archive of the water board of Rijnland, is described from that board's own account of the document and its occasion rather than quoted, since I have not seen the Latin text itself; the account of the *heemraden*'s powers to issue *keuren* and to try offenders, and of the dike-reeve's appointment by the count, rests on the same source and on the standard descriptions of the institution. The bull *Super Universas* of 12 May 1559 is described, not quoted.

Granvelle's private explanation of the great nobles' opposition to the new bishoprics is not quoted directly: it reaches this module through John Lothrop Motley's *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856), which worked from the Granvelle correspondence, and the chain of transmission is stated here because a paraphrase at one remove is weaker evidence than a clause, and should be read as Motley's rendering of Granvelle's letters rather than as Granvelle's words. A striking sentence attributed to the dike engineer Andries Vierlingh, whose *Tractaet van dyckagie* was written between about 1576 and 1579, was found in only one modern secondary source with modernised spelling and has therefore been dropped rather than quoted, per this project's rule that a doubtful line is dropped and not guessed.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms. The account of the *cope* contracts, the standard *hoeve* dimensions, the terms offered to colonists and the role of the *locator* follows the Dutch regional literature on the Grote Ontginning; the subsidence rate of roughly a metre per century is the figure given in that literature and should be read as an order of magnitude rather than a constant. Population and urbanisation figures for 1514 — some 268,000 in Holland, about forty-five per cent urban, Leiden the largest town at around fourteen thousand, against roughly 750,000 in Flanders and 413,000 in Brabant and about 2.4 million in the Low Countries as a whole — derive from the *Informacie* of 1514 and the *Enqueste* of 1494 as summarised in the standard reference literature, and the underlying surveys are contested in their

coverage. Fleet and grain figures — capacity rising from some 19,000 to some 80,000 lasts between about 1500 and 1567, Baltic grain imports from around 10,000 to around 60,000 lasts — are from the Baltic trade scholarship and are estimates. The Sound Toll registers of 1497 and 1503 showing early Dutch dominance are cited on the authority of De Vries and Van der Woude. The peat figure of more than sixty thousand hectares of Holland and Utrecht lost to water, and the seventeen thousand hectares of the merged Haarlemmermeer, come from the secondary literature on peat extraction and are approximate; the underlying debate, running from de Zeeuw's claim that the Golden Age was born of turf through Unger's correction on coal imports, is live and is not resolved here. Landownership figures for around 1560, showing a large share of Holland's land in burgher hands and overwhelmingly leased out by 1650, are from the work of Van Bavel and Van Zanden on rural Holland.

Contested figures are given as ranges or flagged. The count of documented executions for heresy between 1523 and 1566 — more than thirteen hundred, roughly evenly divided north and south — is the archival figure, and the true total is higher by an unknown margin; the very large figures found in older martyrological and nineteenth-century accounts are noted and rejected. The dates of the Burgundian acquisitions vary by a year in the literature according to whether one counts a treaty, an abdication or an effective occupation — Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland appear as 1432 or 1433, Luxembourg as 1441 or 1443 — and the dates used here are the settlement dates, with the Reconciliation of Delft of 1428 and Jacoba's abdication of 1433 both named. The claim that the settlement with Denmark of 1544 exempted Holland's shipping from the Sound toll is the scholarship's characterisation and is reported as such.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where the wording or provenance of a source could not be confirmed, it has been left out and the omission recorded.

The Garrison Had Gone to Utrecht

The founding conquest — how twenty-five ships and some six hundred men took two provinces in ten weeks, not by fighting for them but by arriving at towns where a faction inside was ready to open the gate; what the two sides then did to each other at Gorinchem, Zutphen, Naarden and Haarlem to make the arrangement stick; and how the order was finally secured by cutting the dikes that five centuries of labour had built, over the objection of the people who had built them.

The rebellion that had already failed

Begin at the point of maximum discouragement, because everything about the founding is unintelligible unless one starts from the fact that by the winter of 1571 the Netherlandish rebellion was finished.

It had begun promisingly enough. In the spring of 1566 several hundred lesser nobles formed a league and presented the regent, Margaret of Parma, with a petition against the heresy placards; the story that one of her councillors dismissed them as beggars is the origin of the name the rebels afterwards took for themselves and wore as a badge. That August the iconoclasm broke out, beginning in the Westhoek and running north through Flanders, Brabant, Holland and beyond, stripping the images out of hundreds of churches within a few weeks. The important fact about that summer is not the smashing but the standing still: in town after town the civic militia companies — the *schutterij*, made up of the solid householders who were the only organised armed force inside the walls — declined to turn out and protect the churches. The men holding the weapons inside the towns chose not to use them, and Margaret, having no other force at hand, conceded that Protestant worship might continue where it had already begun.

Philip II answered by sending an army. The Duke of Alba entered Brussels in August 1567 with roughly ten thousand men, and within weeks had erected the instrument that made his name: the Council of Troubles, established on 20 October 1567 to try heresy, sedition and participation in the iconoclasm outside the ordinary jurisdictions, with appeal lying to Alba alone. It processed something over twelve thousand cases. It handed down in the region of nine to ten thousand sentences of banishment or confiscation and something like a thousand to eleven hundred capital condemnations, a great many of them in absentia, and it seized the property of everyone it condemned into the central treasury. On 5 June 1568 it beheaded the

Counts of Egmont and Hoorn in the Grand Place at Brussels — two Knights of the Golden Fleece, Catholics, men who had served the crown all their lives and had never taken up arms against it.

William of Orange, who had prudently left for his German lands, invaded that year and was comprehensively beaten. His brother Louis won a skirmish at Heiligerlee in May and was destroyed at Jemmingen in July; Orange's own march into Brabant in the autumn achieved nothing because no town would take his garrison. Tens of thousands went into exile — the estimates run to perhaps sixty thousand over the period, and the figure is soft. By 1570 Alba had issued a general pardon. The Netherlands were pacified. That is the position from which the Republic was founded.

The tax that made Catholics into rebels

What broke the pacification was not religion. It was a sales tax.

An army of the size Alba was maintaining could not be paid out of the ordinary revenues, and Alba's object, correctly understood, went beyond paying it: he intended a permanent revenue that the crown would control without asking anybody. In March 1569 he laid three demands before the States General — a hundredth penny, a one per cent levy on capital, to be taken once; a twentieth penny, five per cent on transfers of real property; and a tenth penny, ten per cent on all sales of goods, permanently. The last two were the point, because a permanent yield from ordinary commerce would end the necessity of summoning the provincial estates and asking.

The States voted the hundredth penny and refused the rest, buying him off instead with a fixed payment of two million guilders for two years. When that expired he moved to collect the tenth penny anyway. What followed in the spring of 1572 was not a rising but a strike: shopkeepers shut their shops rather than sell at a tenth to the government, troops were sent into premises to enforce collection, and commerce in the great towns stopped.

The framework's own instruction on any tax instrument is to read what the payer is actually being asked for rather than the rate, and here the answer was plain to every merchant and every magistrate in the country. A permanent tax collected on the crown's authority, without the estates, and yielding enough to keep an army standing, converts every privilege in the country into a courtesy. It did to the Catholic burgher of Amsterdam precisely what it did to the Calvinist exile: it told him that the arrangement under which his town had been governed for three hundred years — the ruler asks, the towns grant, the grant is temporary — was over. Alba understood this clearly and intended it. That is why the tenth penny, and not the placards, is the measure that

united Catholics with Calvinists, and why the men who let the rebels in that summer were in many towns not Protestants at all.

Twenty-five ships with nowhere to go

The instrument that arrived was a fleet of privateers who had been made homeless by an English diplomatic decision.

The Sea Beggars — *Watergeuzen* — were exiles: dispossessed nobles, sailors, refugees from the Council of Troubles, sailing under letters of marque issued by Orange in his capacity as the King's lawful stadholder of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht, which he continued to claim he was. They took prizes in the Channel and North Sea and sold them in English harbours, and they were, by any ordinary description, pirates with a commission. In the early spring of 1572 Elizabeth I closed her ports to them.

That left twenty-five ships with a few hundred men aboard and nowhere to victual. Contrary weather turned them off the coast, and on the afternoon of 1 April 1572 they anchored in the Maas off the small walled port of Brielle. What happened next is worth stating exactly, because the founding of a state that lasted two hundred and sixteen years rests on it.

Willem Bloys van Treslong, one of the captains and a native of the town, learned from local contacts that the Spanish garrison had been withdrawn — sent inland to deal with disorder at Utrecht. The Beggars put the ferryman Jan Pietersz Coppelstock ashore to carry a demand for surrender to the burgomaster, Dirck Koekebakker, in the name of the Prince of Orange. The burgomaster refused. About two hundred men then landed, forced the gates against the handful of defenders remaining, and by evening the banner of Orange was up over the town. The whole company numbered perhaps six hundred. Casualties were slight. Four days later the town carpenter Rochus Meeuwiszoon cut the Nieuwland sluices and put the surrounding country under water, and the attempt to retake the place failed.

Alba had judged the Beggars to be pirates who could be ignored because they had no base on land. The judgement was sound until the afternoon it stopped being sound, and what changed it was not a battle but a troop movement made for another reason entirely.

Ten weeks

Then the country fell over, and the speed is the evidence.

News of Brielle reached Flushing, which went over on about 3 May, and Veere with it; Walcheren followed, though the provincial capital Middelburg held out for the King

until February 1574. Orange, still in Germany, moved at once — not with an army, which he did not have, but with paper. He sent commissioners into Holland and Zeeland with commissions to take over local government on his behalf as stadholder, which is to say in the King's name, under the office he claimed never to have lost. Diederik Sonoy carried the northern quarter: Enkhuizen, Hoorn, Medemblik, Edam, Alkmaar, and eventually Haarlem. Lumey took the south: Oudewater on 19 June, Gouda on 21 June, Gorinchem, Dordrecht. Leiden declared for Orange without anyone arriving to make it. Rotterdam followed. Delft sat still for a while and then came in. By 18 July, among the towns that mattered, only Amsterdam and Schoonhoven were openly for the crown, and Amsterdam — where the burgomaster Hendrick Dirkszoon held the Catholic party together against the sheriff's faction — would stay loyal until 1578.

On 19 July, in the refectory of the Augustinian convent at Dordrecht, the States of Holland met without being summoned by the King's governor, which was itself the offence. Twelve towns sent men, along with a nobleman for the Ridderschap. They recognised Orange as stadholder of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht and as protector of the Netherlands in the absence of His Royal Majesty. Marnix of St Aldegonde, appearing for the Prince, asked them for a hundred thousand crowns to cover the first month's pay of an army of seven thousand horse and fifteen thousand foot. And Orange, through Marnix, promised in return that he would not govern Holland without the consent of the States.

That last sentence is the constitution of the Dutch Republic, and it was given as a receipt.

Who actually opened the gates

Now the analytical question, and it is the one the whole module exists to answer: by what force was this done?

Not by the Beggars, who at Brielle numbered six hundred and could not have stormed a defended town of any size. Not by Orange's army, which in the summer of 1572 did not exist and which, when he did put one into Brabant in the autumn — some sixteen thousand mostly German mercenaries — accomplished nothing, because Mechelen and Oudenaarde were the only towns that would take his garrison, and Mechelen was sacked for it. Not by any battle: there was no battle in Holland in 1572 worth the name.

The towns were not conquered. They defected, and in each case the mechanism was the same: a faction inside the walls, an armed party outside credible enough to be worth siding with, and a militia that would not fight to prevent it.

The *schutterij* is the hinge. Every Holland town had one — companies of enrolled burghers with arms, drilling at the *doelen*, socially respectable, and constituting the only organised force inside the walls once the garrisons had been drawn away or had never been there. In 1566 those companies had declined to defend the churches against iconoclasts drawn from their own town. In 1572 most of them declined again, and in some towns they did more than decline. When the magistrates of Haarlem sent four men to Amsterdam that December to negotiate terms with the Spanish commander, the Prince's officer Wigbolt Ripperda called the militia together at the *doelen*, argued them into staying with Orange, deposed the sitting magistracy, replaced it with Orangists, and arrested the negotiators when they came home. That is not a conquest of Haarlem. It is a coup inside Haarlem, carried by the men who already held the weapons, and it was performed in the middle of a war rather than at its start.

Set that beside the arithmetic every town council in Holland was doing in June 1572 and the cascade explains itself without any appeal to enthusiasm. A magistrate weighing the position saw: a government that had just tried to take a tenth of every sale in perpetuity and had sent soldiers into shops to get it; a Council of Troubles that had killed two Knights of the Golden Fleece and confiscated the estates of thousands; no royal garrison in his town, because there were never enough troops to hold thirty walled towns and the field army was engaged in the south; a neighbouring town that had already gone over; a militia that would not shoot at the men outside; and a party inside his own council urging that they open. Against that, loyalty to an absent king whose local instrument was universally hated. Very few men in that position hold out, and the ones who did — Amsterdam, Middelburg, Schoonhoven — did so for reasons that were also concrete, chiefly a dominant Catholic faction with commercial interests running the other way.

So the founding act of force in this study was not a conquest at all in the sense the framework usually means. It was a general defection of local armed bodies, coordinated loosely by commissions issued on paper by a man in Germany, exploiting the absence of any garrison dense enough to hold the country.

And that has a consequence which will run through everything after it. A conqueror who takes a town by storm owes it nothing. A prince who is let in by the town's own militia and magistracy holds it on whatever terms the men who let him in choose to name, and they name them at once. Orange's undertaking at Dordrecht not to govern without the States' consent was not a philosophical concession; it was the price of the eleven or twelve gates that had been opened for him, and it was demanded within weeks of the opening. The towns that came in during 1572 were subsequently admitted to the States of Holland on their own account, so that a body of the nobility

and six voting towns became, in time, a body of the nobility and eighteen. **The floor was acquired unit by unit, and each unit kept a veto because a veto is what it was paid.**

What both sides then did, and why it did not work

Having been taken by defection, the arrangement had to be made to hold, and both sides reached immediately for terror. It is necessary to give both, in the same paragraph and at the same weight, because a study that gives one is not describing what happened.

On 9 July 1572, three months after Brielle, Lumey's men took nineteen Catholic clergy from Gorinchem — eleven Franciscans, four secular priests and others — to Brielle, tortured them, and hanged them in a turf shed for refusing to renounce the papal supremacy and the real presence. Across the newly taken towns in that summer monasteries were plundered, religious houses broken up, priests robbed and imprisoned and in a number of cases killed. Orange, who wanted the moderate Catholic magistracies to stay with him and knew exactly what this was costing him, had Lumey removed from command within the year and set about breaking the Beggar captains to a regular army.

On the other side, Alba sent his son Don Fadrique north in the autumn with orders to make examples. Zutphen was stormed on 17 November 1572 and hundreds of its people killed. Naarden surrendered on 22 November on terms; on 1 December its inhabitants were assembled in a church which was then fired, and the reported death toll is about three thousand, in a town that had already given itself up. Haarlem was invested on 11 December and held out for seven months, its defenders at one point beheading Spanish prisoners and returning the heads to the besiegers in a barrel. It surrendered on 13 July 1573 on written assurances, which were kept as to the town — the citizens bought the place free of sack for two hundred and forty thousand guilders — and not as to the men. The garrison of some thousands was put to death, the Germans among them excepted; forty burghers were executed for sedition; the executioners ran short of ammunition and drowned many of the remainder in the Spaarne; the governor Ripperda and his lieutenant were beheaded. Two years later at Oudewater, in August 1575, something close to half the town's people may have died.

The totals for the whole of Alba's governorship are contested and should be given as such. The judicial figure — around a thousand to eleven hundred executions by the Council of Troubles — is reasonably firm. The wider figures are not: Alba is reported to have claimed some eighteen thousand executions, his successor Requesens is said to have put it at six thousand, and modern assessments treat both as inflated by the inclusion of battle deaths and unverified denunciations, while some general estimates

of all killed by execution, sack and massacre under his rule run as high as fifty thousand. There is no honest single number and this study does not offer one.

What can be said with confidence is what the terror did, and it is the opposite of what it was for. Exemplary severity is an instrument with a precondition: it works by making surrender the cheap option, which requires that surrender actually be safe. Naarden destroyed that precondition. A town that had opened its gates on terms was massacred anyway, and every town in Holland heard about it within a fortnight. From that point the arithmetic inside the walls changed permanently, because holding out and losing now cost no more than surrendering, and holding out and winning cost nothing at all. The record shows the mechanism working immediately: the sources are explicit that the sack of Zutphen made a string of towns in Gelderland, Overijssel and Friesland submit at once to avoid the same, and equally explicit that Naarden hardened Haarlem. The instrument worked exactly as long as the promise attached to it was credible, and it stopped working on the day the promise was broken.

The floor was water

The Spanish army was the best in Europe and Holland could not beat it in the field, and did not try. What defeated it was the ground — and specifically, the ground's capacity to be unmade.

The country the previous five centuries had drained sat below the level of the water around it, held there by dikes and sluices under the jurisdiction of the drainage boards. Cut the dikes and open the sluices and the polders fill: not deep, a foot or two, but enough to make a siege camp uninhabitable, ruin powder, drown trenches, and — this is the part that mattered — enough to float shallow-draught boats across ground that had been pasture the week before. It had been done at Brielle in the first week. It saved Alkmaar in October 1573, where the siege was lifted after the surrounding land was let under water. And in 1574 it was used at scale.

Leiden was invested from October 1573, relieved by a diversion, and reinvested on 26 May 1574. Orange had no army capable of raising the siege. He sent a pigeon into the city asking it to hold three months, and proposed to the States of Holland that the country south of the city be deliberately flooded so that the Beggar fleet could sail to the walls. In August the breaches were made — notches cut in the Hollandsche IJssel between Gouda and the Maas, sea sluices opened to the north — and the water came in slowly and shallowly, held back by easterly winds and by the fact that the polders were at different heights, so that after each dike was cut another was found standing above the water and had to be cut too. In late September the equinoctial storms drove the water up. On the night of 2–3 October the fleet came over the drowned fields to

Leiden and the Spanish left their camps. Of perhaps fifteen to eighteen thousand people in the city, something like six thousand had died of hunger and disease.

Two facts about that operation deserve to be held together, because separately each is a story and together they are the finding.

The first is that the population of the countryside to be flooded objected, and objected hard, and was overruled. They were not being asked to make a sacrifice for a season. Salt water sterilises arable for years; the drainage works themselves would have to be rebuilt; the polders they were being asked to open were the same parcels whose upkeep their families had carried under the dike obligation for generations, each holding responsible for its named stretch. The men who had built the country were required to destroy it to save a town most of them did not live in, and the decision was taken over their heads by a prince acting under a commission from a king he was fighting.

The second is that the instrument he used was theirs. The dikes, the sluices, the sea gates, the knowledge of which cut would put water where — all of it belonged to a jurisdiction the counts of Holland had delegated in the thirteenth century because they could not perform the work themselves and had never recovered. In 1574 that apparatus was turned into a weapon, and it was the decisive weapon of the war in the north. The Republic's floor of force, in its founding decade, was not an army. It was a hydraulic system built by five hundred years of cooperative labour, operated against the interests of the people who maintained it, by a rebel with no lawful authority over it whatever.

Nothing in this is romantic. It is the plainest possible instance of the general rule that the floor is real, that it costs somebody, and that the somebody is not usually the person who decides.

What the founding legend says

Finally, the story told about all of this while it was happening — which is where the gap this study exists to measure first opens.

The rebel song of the war, written at some point between the spring of 1568 and the capture of Brielle in 1572, sung throughout the fighting and surviving complete in a Beggar songbook printed in 1577 or 1578, opens with a first-person profession by the Prince of Orange:

> *Wilhelmus van Nassouwe / Ben ick van Duytschen bloet, / Den Vaderlant getrouwe / Blyf ick tot in den doot: / Een Prince van Oraengien / Ben ick vrij onverveert, / Den Coninck van Hispaengien / Heb ick altijt gheeert.*

William of Nassau am I, of German blood; faithful to the fatherland I remain until death. A prince of Orange am I, free and undaunted; the King of Spain I have always honoured.

A later stanza has him declare before God that he has at no time despised the King, only that he was obliged to obey God, of the highest majesty, in righteousness. The authorship is disputed — Marnix and Coornhert have both been proposed and neither ever claimed it — and nothing here turns on who wrote it.

What turns on it is this. The men taking the towns of Holland in 1572 were fighting under a commission issued by a stadholder who insisted he still held the King's office; they assembled at Dordrecht and recognised him in the King's absence; they described what they were doing as the removal of a tyrannous governor and the defence of privileges the King himself had sworn; and they sang a song in which their leader states that he has always honoured the King of Spain. Nine years would pass before they got round to saying that the King was not their king. Whether any particular man believed the formula is not recoverable and this study does not guess; what is recoverable is that the formula was necessary, and one can see why by looking at whom it was addressed to. It was addressed to the Catholic magistrates and Catholic militiamen of towns like Gouda and Delft, who had let the Beggars in over a tax and had no intention of deposing an anointed king; to the German princes whose money and mercenaries Orange needed; and to a France and England that would not back an open republican rebellion. It was not addressed to the Spanish, who were not deceived for a moment.

Set that beside what was actually being done in the same months — clergy hanged at Brielle in July, magistracies deposed by militias, a countryside deliberately drowned — and the shape of the whole study is already visible. This is an order whose public account of itself was, from the first year, a legally impeccable statement of loyalty, and whose floor was laid by armed defection, exemplary killing on both sides, and the destruction of its own ground.

Reading the founding against the framework

The framework's expectation for a founding is a conquest: an armed force that takes ground, disarms the population, and then lays a belief over the result to make holding it cheap. This case does not fit that shape, and the way it fails to fit is the module's contribution.

There was no conquest of Holland in 1572. There was a **defection of the floor**, town by town, in which the only organised armed force inside each town — the burgher militia — declined to defend the existing order and in several places actively

removed it, while an outside party too small to compel anybody supplied the occasion, the commission and the flag. Six hundred men at an undefended port, and then paper.

The consequence is a general proposition, and it is the one to carry forward. **A floor acquired by defection is bought unit by unit, and each unit's price is its own consent; so the resulting order inherits as many vetoes as it had defections, and it inherits them immediately, not by later constitutional development.** Orange gave his undertaking not to govern Holland without the States in the same week the towns came in — before there was a state, before there was a constitution, before there was any doctrine to justify it. The towns that defected were then seated in the provincial assembly on their own account, and their number grew from six to eighteen precisely because defection was what had been rewarded. Anyone examining that assembly two centuries later and asking why it required consent from bodies that could each refuse is asking a constitutional question about what is really a receipt. The rule was not adopted; it was owed.

This also refines the standard reading of the founding narrative. The framework holds that a legitimating story is laid over the floor afterward, to make the force cheap. Here the sequence is compressed to nothing: the story of continuing loyalty to the King was in circulation *before* the towns fell, was the operative content of the commissions under which they were taken, and was in a sense the instrument of the taking, because what the commissioners carried into each town was precisely the claim that joining Orange was the lawful course and staying with Alba was not. Where a floor is acquired by defection rather than by storm, the robe cannot come afterwards, because the defector needs a reason on the day he opens the gate. **Storm first and explain later; defect, and the explanation has to arrive with the messenger.**

Two smaller observations are entered here for later modules to use rather than argued.

Exemplary terror has a precondition that is easy to miss because it is a promise rather than a threat: it works by making surrender cheap, and therefore requires that surrender be honoured. Zutphen made towns submit; Naarden, which had already submitted, made them fight. The instrument was destroyed by its own operator in the space of a fortnight, and the mechanism is visible in the record on both sides of the break.

And the drainage jurisdiction, delegated by a count in the thirteenth century because the work could not be supervised from a chancery, turned out five hundred years later to be a weapon of war that the sovereign could not use and the rebel could — because using it required not authority but the cooperation of the men who held the sluices, and in 1574 they were persuaded, coerced and overruled by the Prince and

not by the King. An apparatus that an apex cannot resume is an apparatus that can be turned against him, and the interval between the delegation and the turning may be measured in centuries.

A note on sources.

One primary text is quoted exactly in the original with a translation: the first stanza of the *Wilhelmus*, in the sixteenth-century orthography as it appears in the standard reproductions of the early text. Its composition is dated by the scholarship to between April 1568 and April 1572; the oldest surviving complete Dutch text is in a *Geuzenliedboek* printed in 1577 or 1578; the authorship is genuinely disputed, with Marnix of St Aldegonde and Dirck Coornhert both proposed and neither ever having claimed it, and nothing in this module rests on the attribution. The later stanza in which the singer declares before God that he never despised the King is described rather than quoted, since I have not verified its wording against an edition of the early text.

No other primary document is quoted. Orange's undertaking at Dordrecht not to govern Holland without the consent of the States, the recognition of him as stadholder and as protector in the absence of His Royal Majesty, and Marnix's request for a hundred thousand crowns towards an army of seven thousand horse and fifteen thousand foot are all reported from the Dutch national archive's account of the minutes of 19–23 July 1572, which names the delegates present; I have not read the minutes themselves and the wording given here is a summary and not a quotation. The same caution applies to the commissions Orange issued to Sonoy and the other emissaries, which are described from the secondary literature.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms. The account of the civic militia's refusal to act in 1566 rests on J. C. Grayson's work on the militia companies of Holland and on Jonathan Israel's reading of the same evidence. The narrative of the 1572 cascade — Brielle on 1 April, Flushing and Veere in early May, Sonoy in the northern quarter, Lumey at Oudewater on 19 June and Gouda on 21 June, Leiden's unprompted declaration, and the position on 18 July when only Amsterdam and Schoonhoven among the significant towns remained loyal — follows the standard chronologies of the Revolt.

Figures are given as the record gives them, with ranges and doubts stated. The Sea Beggar force at Brielle is reported as twenty-five ships and about six hundred men, of whom roughly two hundred landed. The Council of Troubles is reported as processing upwards of twelve thousand cases, with roughly nine to ten thousand sentences of banishment or confiscation and approximately one thousand to eleven hundred capital condemnations; these are the figures the modern literature converges on, and they are

incomplete because many sentences were passed in absentia. The wider death tolls under Alba's governorship are irreducibly contested: the claim of some eighteen thousand executions attributed to Alba himself and the figure of six thousand attributed to Requesens are both treated by modern historians as inflated, and general estimates running to fifty thousand for all deaths by execution, sack and massacre are cited in the literature without being established. This module gives no single total and takes none of these as settled. The Naarden death toll of about three thousand is the reported figure and rests on a narrow evidentiary base; the Zutphen toll is given as hundreds rather than as the whole population, since the claim that every inhabitant was killed appears in some accounts and is not supported by the more careful ones. Haarlem's ransom of two hundred and forty thousand guilders, the execution of the garrison with the Germans excepted, and the forty burghers executed are as reported; Leiden's mortality of roughly six thousand out of perhaps fifteen to eighteen thousand is the standard figure and is an estimate. The number of dike breaches made in August 1574 is given in one modern account as sixteen notches in the Hollandsche IJssel between Gouda and the Maas; I have not been able to trace that count to a contemporary source and it is reported here as the secondary literature's figure rather than as established.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where wording or provenance could not be confirmed, the passage has been described rather than quoted, or dropped.

MODULE 2

As If They Were but One Province

The settlement — a treaty of defence that opens by binding seven provinces into one and, in the same sentence, guarantees every privilege each of them holds against the other; a Church estate that was not sold to a new gentry but sequestered as an income and administered by the province that took it; and a winning class that received no land at all, only offices, which is a different kind of possession and produces a different kind of loyalty.

What there was to divide

The towns of Holland and Zeeland had taken themselves out of the King's obedience in the summer of 1572, and by the end of the decade the practical question in front of the men who had done it was the one every successful faction faces: what exactly have we got, and who is to have it.

Four things were on the table, and only one of them was land.

The first was the King's rights in the provinces — a portfolio rather than an estate. The count of Holland held domains that yielded rents and tolls; he held the right to appoint each town's magistrates from a shortlist the town itself drew up; he held the right to summon the provincial assembly and to ask it for money; and he held the right to make war and peace. These were not property but powers, and they now had no holder.

The second was the estate of the Church, and it was enormous. Abbeys, chapters, commanderies, parsonages, sextonships, vicarages, chapelries, benefices, tithes, and a great deal of the best-administered land in the country, accumulated over eight hundred years and untouched by any dissolution.

The third was the property of individuals — those who had fled, on both sides, and those condemned by whichever authority currently held the town. Each side ran confiscations, and the accounts survive in the domain chambers.

The fourth was office: the seats in the town councils vacated by men who had gone over to the King or had been thrown out for not going over to Orange, and the whole apparatus of appointments those councils controlled.

How those four things were divided is the settlement, and the shape of it is unlike anything else in this collection.

The instrument, and its first sentence

The document usually named as the founding charter of the Dutch Republic is the Union concluded at Utrecht on 23 January 1579. It is worth being precise about what it is, because it does not describe itself as a constitution and it was not one. It is a treaty of mutual defence, and its own text calls it a union, a confederation and a bond.

It opens like this:

> *Ende eerst, dat die voorsz. provincien sich met den anderen verbynden, confedereren ende vereenyghen sullen, gelijck si hem verbynden, confedereren ende vereenyghen mits desen, ten ewygen daeghen by den anderen te blijven in alle forme ende maniere als off siluyden maer een provincie waeren, sonder dat deselve hem tenyger tijde van den anderen sullen scheyden, laeten scheyden ofte separeren bij testamente, codicille, donatie, cessie, wisselinghe, vercopinghe, tractaeten van peys, van huwelick noch om geen anderen oorzaecken, hoe dat het gebeuren soude moegen, onvermindert nochtans een ygelick provincien ende die particulier steden, leden ende ingesetenen van dyen haerluyden spetiaele ende particuliere privilegien, vrijheyden, exemptien, rechten, statuten, loffelicke ende welheergebrochte costumen, usantien ende allen anderen haerluyden gerechticheyden...*

And first, that the said provinces shall bind, confederate and unite themselves with one another, as by these presents they do bind, confederate and unite themselves, to remain together for ever in every form and manner as if they were but one province, without ever at any time separating, allowing themselves to be separated, or being separated from one another by testament, codicil, donation, cession, exchange, sale, treaties of peace or of marriage, nor for any other cause whatsoever it might come about — saving nevertheless to every province and to the particular towns, members and inhabitants thereof their special and particular privileges, freedoms, exemptions, rights, statutes, laudable and well-established customs, usages and all their other rights...

The whole settlement is in that one sentence, and the hinge is the word *onvermindert* — saving nevertheless. The provinces are to be as one province and simultaneously to lose nothing whatever that made them separate. Nor is this an oversight of drafting: the article goes on to say that where a dispute arises between two members of the Union about those particular privileges, it shall be settled by ordinary justice, arbitration or amicable agreement, and that the other provinces are not to meddle in it so long as both parties submit to law.

The instrument does not conceal what it is doing. It is a mutual guarantee among parties who have just discovered that they need each other militarily and who intend to

concede nothing else. Read the drafting for the clause that decides which version is real, as one should read any founding instrument, and it is the saving clause, not the union clause, that governs everything after it.

Two facts of provenance should be recorded because they correct the retrospective picture. The Union was not signed by seven provinces. The parties on 23 January were Gelderland and Zutphen, Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and the Ommelanden between the Ems and the Lauwers; the town of Ghent acceded on 4 February, Nijmegen on 5 March, Arnhem on 9 March, Friesland on 23 March, Venlo on 11 April, Amersfoort on 10 June, Ypres on 10 July, Antwerp on 29 July, Breda on 13 September, Bruges and the Land of Strijen on 1 February 1580, Lier on 16 February, Drenthe on 11 April. Half of that list would be reconquered within a decade. The "seven provinces" is a fact about the outcome of the war, not about the treaty. And the Union was concluded seven years after the towns changed sides — which is to say that the settlement document was drawn up long after the settlement had been made on the ground, and its business was to write down an arrangement already in operation rather than to create one.

Article IX, and what the veto was paying for

The clause that would govern the Republic's whole political life is the ninth, and it is short:

> *Item en zal men geen accoordt van bestant oft peys maecken, noch oorloge aenveerden, noch enyge imposten ofte contributie instellen, die generaliteit van desen verbande aengaende, dan met gemeen advys ende consent van de voorsz. provincien, maer in andere saecken... sal men hem regulieren naer tghene geadviseert ende gesloten sal worden bij de meeste stemmen van de provincien...*

Item, no agreement of truce or peace shall be made, nor war undertaken, nor any imposts or contributions imposed touching the generality of this bond, save by common advice and consent of the said provinces; but in other matters... one shall be governed by what shall be advised and resolved by the most voices of the provinces...

Unanimity for peace, war and general taxation; majority for the rest; and where the provinces cannot agree on those four reserved matters, the dispute goes to the stadholders of the united provinces, who are to settle it as they find equitable, calling in impartial assessors if they cannot agree between themselves.

It is easy to read that clause as a doctrine about sovereignty, and it is not one. It is a receipt. Seven years earlier these provinces and towns had not been conquered; they had defected, one at a time, and each had been taken into the rebellion on terms it

named for itself — the Prince undertaking within days of the first free assembly that he would not govern Holland without the consent of its States. A body assembled out of parties who joined voluntarily, each holding something the others needed, and none of whom could be compelled, will write down a rule requiring the consent of each, because that rule is a description of how they came to be in the room.

The drafters were not naïve about the difficulty. The nineteenth article provides that if members summoned to Utrecht fail to appear, those present may proceed anyway; that on a matter grave enough to bear delay the absentees shall be summoned a second time on pain of forfeiting their vote for that occasion; and that what is then concluded shall bind the absent. They saw the problem of the missing member and legislated for it. What they did not do — because they could not — was provide any way of proceeding against a member who was present and said no.

Two further clauses set the terms on which the floor itself was to be held, and they are the most revealing military provisions in the treaty. By the seventh article, frontier towns and others as needed must accept such garrisons as the united provinces determine, with the advice of the governor of the province concerned, *and may not refuse them* — but the garrisons are to be paid by the united provinces, and the captains and soldiers, over and above the general oath, are to swear a particular oath to the town and province in which they are quartered, and this is to be written into their articles of service. A federally paid army, locally sworn, town by town. And by the twenty-fifth article, the stadholders, magistrates and chief officers of every province and town are to swear to maintain all the *schutteryen*, brotherhoods and colleges within the towns of the Union — which is to say that the burgher militia companies, the bodies whose refusal to fight in 1566 and whose active intervention in 1572 had actually delivered the towns, were written into the founding treaty as institutions the government was sworn to preserve.

The tax that was written down and never levied

The fifth article specifies how the common defence is to be paid for, and it is the most consequential dead letter in Dutch constitutional history.

It provides that throughout all the united provinces, uniformly and at one rate, there shall be levied — farmed out every three months to the highest bidder, or collected — certain imposts on all sorts of wines, on beers brewed within and without, on the milling of corn and grain, on salt, on gold, silver, silk and woollen cloths, on horned cattle and sown land, on beasts slaughtered, on horses and oxen bought or bartered, on goods coming to the weigh-house, and such others as may later be agreed; and that the income of the King's domains, less the charges on them, shall be employed

to the same end. The sixth article adds that these revenues may be raised or lowered by common advice as need requires and may be applied to nothing but the common defence. The eighteenth forbids any province or town to impose tolls, convoy dues or similar burdens to the prejudice of another, or to charge a confederate more heavily than its own inhabitants.

On the face of the instrument, that is a single fiscal space: one schedule of excises, one rate, no internal tariffs, funded partly out of the confiscated royal domain.

It was never implemented. What the provinces did instead was continue the practice they had inherited from the Habsburgs: each paid a fixed share — the *repartitie* — of a budget the Council of State drew up, and raised the money at home by whatever means it chose. After some adjustment the quotas were fixed in 1616 and stood unchanged until 1792. Holland's share was around fifty-seven or fifty-eight per cent, and because other provinces fell into arrears and Holland made up the difference, in practice it often paid more; Friesland stood at about eleven per cent, Zeeland at eleven falling to nine, Utrecht and Groningen at five and a half, Overijssel at three and a half.

This matters far more than a technical failure of implementation, and the reason is worth stating plainly. A common excise levied at one rate across all seven provinces would have created a revenue the Generality collected in its own right, and a body that collects its own revenue does not have to ask. The men who signed the fifth article were the same men who had gone into rebellion over Alba's attempt to establish exactly such a revenue for the crown. They wrote the clause because an army has to be paid, and they never built the machinery, because each of them was individually better off under an arrangement in which the centre had to come and ask his province for its share. The treaty text describes a state; the ledger describes a league. When the two disagree, the ledger is the settlement.

What became of the Church's estate

Now the largest single asset, and the disposal of it is where this settlement differs most sharply from every comparable case.

The seizure began at once — not in 1579 or 1580 but in the founding week. At the first free assembly of the States of Holland at Dordrecht, on 19 July 1572, the States both forbade the plundering of ecclesiastical goods and laid hold of the income of church and monastic property in order to pay preachers. Both halves of that sentence are the settlement. The plundering was stopped because a plundered asset yields nothing; the income was taken because there was now a Reformed ministry to fund and no other fund to do it from.

The administration followed. By a resolution of 10 January 1577 the States of Holland brought the incomes of all the parsonages in the rural quarters — South Holland, Rijnland, Delfland, Schieland — under a single receiver, and the *Geestelijk Kantoor* of Delft came into being. From then on the ministers were paid from it, and the churchwardens of the individual parishes were placed under its tutelage: every decision about the fabric of a church, every lease of church land, every appointment of a minister and every salary went through the office. Zeeland did something similar and something different, merging three administrations into a spiritual office in 1578 — but there most of the ecclesiastical goods were sold outright, in 1576 and 1579, and what the office administered was the proceeds. Out of these offices were paid the stipends of ministers, schoolmasters and sextons, the upkeep and rebuilding of churches, and — the item that shows what kind of settlement this was — maintenance to those Roman Catholic clergy and religious who remained and undertook not to propagate their religion. From 1596 the Zeeland office also paid bursaries for students of theology.

The Union's own text had provided for this. Its fourteenth article directs that conventuals and clergy be left the goods they hold reciprocally in any of the united provinces, following the Pacification of Ghent, with an obligation on convents to provide proper maintenance for life to religious who had crossed the lines; the fifteenth extends life maintenance out of convent income to anyone who had left, or wished to leave, a monastery or spiritual college for reasons of religion or other reasonable cause, and grants those still inside freedom of religion and of dress, saving obedience to their superior in other matters. An amplification agreed on 1 February 1579 suspends all lawsuits arising from the inheritance claims of former religious, because such suits had already begun.

Set this beside the obvious comparison and the difference is stark. In England the monastic estate was broken up and sold, and the purchase created a class of laymen whose title to their land ran through the dissolution and who therefore had a permanent private interest in the Reformation not being reversed. Nothing of the sort happened in Holland. The estate was not privatised; it was provincialised. It became an income stream held by the States, administered by a public office, and disbursed to salaried employees.

Three consequences follow, and they run through the rest of this study.

The Reformed minister of a Holland village was not a beneficed clerk holding a freehold. He was on a stipend paid by an office of the States, appointed through that office, and removable. The public church of the Dutch Republic was, from the first decade, financially the creature of the civil magistrate — which is a fact about who

could discipline whom, and it will be the whole substance of the fight between the ministers and the regents for two centuries.

The dispossessed were pensioned rather than ruined. Catholic religious who stayed and kept quiet drew maintenance for life from the estate that had been taken from them. That is an expensive way to perform a confiscation and a cheap way to prevent a rising, and it belongs in the ledger as both.

And no individual in Holland acquired a defensible private stake in the settlement out of the Church's land. Which raises the question the module now has to answer: what did the winners actually get?

Offices, not estates

They got offices, and almost nothing else.

There was no grant of land to any faction of the rebellion. There was no new nobility. The Ridderschap of Holland remained what it had been — a small collective vote representing a nobility that had never been economically large. What the men who made the rising received, and what their sons and grandsons lived on, was a seat in a town council and the appointments that seat controlled: the burgomasterships and the aldermanic bench, the treasurership, the offices of the town and of the province, and in time the chambers of the chartered companies, the boards of the five admiralties, the receiverships and the places on the drainage boards. Where a burgomaster held the right to appoint to all offices in the town's gift, that right was itself the estate.

Name the consideration, which is the most diagnostic fact any settlement offers. What did a regent owe in return? Not armed service. He was required to bring nothing to the field, kept no retinue, and commanded no men in his own name; the militia companies he was sworn to maintain were the burghers', not his. What he owed was his town's contribution to the province's share of the common budget, his attendance, and his vote. The medieval European grant bought a mounted following and installed a permanent civil-war risk in the same clause; the modern colonial grant bought compliance and deleted the retinue. This settlement paid in office and asked for money and presence.

That is a genuinely different kind of possession, and its properties should be spelled out because they explain almost everything about how the Republic afterwards behaved.

An estate is a thing. It is held against the world, it survives a change of ruler, it can be defended in a court that the next regime will still be running, and its owner can be disloyal and keep it. An office is a position. It exists only while the body that confers it exists in the form that conferred it, it cannot be sold to a stranger or left by will, and its

holder loses everything on the day the chamber is reconstituted. A man given an abbey by one king keeps the abbey under the next. A man given a seat keeps nothing at all.

So an elite paid in offices is bound to the *form* of the constitution in a way a landed elite never is. Its members do not need to love the arrangement; they need only notice that their position has no existence outside it. And the corresponding threat is not confiscation but reconstitution — changing who sits, rather than taking what anyone owns. That is precisely the shape every political crisis in this Republic would take. When the balance shifted in 1618, in 1650, in 1672, in 1747, in 1787, what happened was a *wetsverzetting*: a purge of the town councils, seats emptied and refilled. Nobody's land moved. The whole political history of the order is a series of contests over the occupancy of chairs, and the reason is in the settlement.

The marker

Every settlement has a boundary, and the question worth asking of any of them is not only what marks it but who can audit it.

At the founding there were two boundaries in Holland, and they were of quite different kinds.

The outer one was the burgher right, *poorterschap*, and it was permeable. It could be had by birth, by marriage to a burgher's daughter, or by purchase; the price in the Republic was modest by European standards — the scholarship puts it at something like a few weeks' wages, against several years' saving in parts of Germany — and it was recorded in a burgher book, so that a man could produce a slip of paper proving what he was. It bought real things: the right to set up in trade on one's own account, membership of a guild and therefore the practice of most trades, admission of one's orphans to the burgher orphanage rather than a worse one, exemption from certain tolls. Perhaps a quarter of Amsterdam's inhabitants held it in the early modern period, and of the roughly seventy thousand newcomers who settled in the city between 1616 and 1630 something like one in nine bought it. So the outer boundary excluded most people and admitted anyone who could find the fee — which makes it a toll rather than a wall.

The inner one was the seat in the *vroedschap*, and it was very nearly impermeable. The council filled its own vacancies by co-optation, its members sat for life, and there were a few dozen of them in a town. There was no register of eligible families, no bloodline, no oath, no patent of nobility. What marked a man as inside was simply that the men already inside had chosen him, and the audit of that decision was performed by nobody at all.

This is worth pausing on because it is the most durable form a marker can take. A boundary drawn by a register can be attacked by falsifying or abolishing the register. A boundary drawn by descent can be attacked genealogically. A boundary that consists of nothing but the recorded fact that the sitting members admitted this man and not that one offers no instrument to work on: there is nothing to forge, nothing to repeal, and no external body with standing to review the choice. It cannot be policed downward, and it leaks upward only at the rate the incumbents choose.

The closure was not instantaneous and its hardening can be dated, which is a rare gift. In 1572 and the years after, the councils were reconstituted in a hurry from whoever was available and reliable; at Amsterdam, which held for the King until 1578, the change came on 26 May of that year when the Catholic government was deposed without anyone being killed, and the council formed on 29 May consisted of thirty Calvinists and ten Catholics — which tells you both that the new order needed men and that it did not yet insist on confessional purity. By the middle of the next century the qualifications were being written down. The Dordrecht government regulation of 1652 required an alderman to be thirty years old, Reformed, a born burgher of Dordrecht or married to a burgher's daughter and resident there for ten years after the marriage, and assessed at not less than twenty thousand guilders in the hundredth penny. That is a confessional test and a wealth qualification, in a single clause, enacted eighty years after the founding. It was afterwards relaxed in its details — by 1703 the age was down to twenty-five and the in-married residence to five years — which is the ordinary drift of such rules once the class no longer fears anyone getting in.

The notarised agreements between regent families to share out the offices by rotation, the *contracten van correspondentie*, belong to a later stage still: they appear from the second half of the seventeenth century, become general under the stadholderless regimes and William III, and reach their height in the eighteenth. They are what the marker turned into, not what it was. And their appearance is itself a piece of evidence to carry forward, because a class that begins writing down among itself what had previously gone without saying is a class that has stopped being able to rely on its own informal understandings — which usually means that the number of claimants has outgrown the number of chairs.

The default question

The framework's test of any settlement is to run one question down the whole chain: *if this arrangement collapsed tomorrow, would this man be better or worse off?* The answer, repeated down the chain, is the real constitution.

The regent: catastrophically worse. He owns nothing that came from the settlement except his position in it, and a restored royal government would reconstitute his council, as royal governments in the Netherlands had been doing for a century.

The Reformed minister: worse, and directly. His stipend is paid by an office of the States out of a sequestered Catholic endowment, and a restoration would return the endowment and remove him. He is not, however, made a friend of the regents by this; he is made their dependant, which is a different relation and a quarrelsome one.

The militia officer and his company: better off than under the previous order, in which the churches they declined to defend belonged to a Church whose placards could reach them. Their companies are now written into the founding treaty as bodies the magistrates are sworn to maintain. This is a real stake and a modest one.

The excise farmer, who has bought the right to collect a levy on beer or grain: entirely dependent, and visible in the street, which will matter when a crowd wants somebody to attack.

The Catholic who stayed: ambiguous, and deliberately so. He kept his property, drew a pension if he was a religious, and was not to be examined about his belief; he lost his church buildings, his public worship, and any route to office. Whether he was better or worse off under a restoration depended on how much he had, which is precisely the calculation the settlement was designed to make him perform.

The labourer in Leiden or the peat-digger in the Rijnland: no stake whatever. He owns no office, holds no burgher right unless he bought one, and pays the excises on beer, bread-grain and salt that Article V named. He is in the settlement only as its subject.

The chain's weak link is not at the bottom. A man with no stake is not a threat while a floor is credible, and the labourer of Holland was in no position to do anything. The weak link is the minister — a man whose living the settlement pays and whose authority the settlement subordinates, and who therefore has both a grievance and a pulpit. That is where this order's internal fracture will run, and it is visible in the disposal of the Church's estate in 1572 and 1577, forty years before anyone fought about it.

Reading the settlement against the framework

The framework expects a settlement to divide conquered wealth among individuals, and expects the instrument to do a specific piece of work first: to convert relations into things, so that what was office or lineage right or collective patrimony becomes an estate that can be granted, and to re-source the grantee's title so that his holding now comes

from a register the new power maintains. Same ground, different source, and the source is the tie.

This settlement did none of that, and the reason is in the ground. The land of Holland had been a commodity since it was manufactured under contract five centuries earlier; there were no collective patrimonies to dissolve and no office-lands to convert, because the country had been born alienable. And the great confiscated estate, the Church's, was not converted into private things at all: in Holland it was sequestered whole as an income and vested in the province, administered by a public office, and spent on salaries.

So the winners took nothing that a conqueror in this collection would recognise as spoil. They took **offices**, and the proposition this module contributes is about what that does.

Where a settlement distributes offices rather than estates, the beneficiary's stake lies not in a possession but in the continued existence of the body that appoints him — which binds him to the constitutional form far more tightly than a grant of land would, because a landed grantee survives a change of regime and an office-holder does not. The medieval grant bought a retinue and installed a civil war in the same clause. The colonial grant bought compliance and left a dependant with a title he could still hold under a different flag. This settlement bought neither service nor compliance: it made the recipient's entire position an artefact of the arrangement, so that he had no need to approve of it and no way to survive it.

Two corollaries follow, and both are testable in the modules to come.

The first is a prediction about the form of conflict. An order whose elite is paid in offices will experience its crises as **contests over occupancy rather than over property**, and its purges will be reconstitutions of councils rather than confiscations of land. Where a study of such an order finds no expropriations it should not conclude that the politics were mild; it should go and count the seats.

The second is a caution about the boundary. The marker of this elite was neither a bloodline nor a register nor a written contract, but the bare fact of co-optation — the sitting members' choice, recorded nowhere as a qualification and reviewable by nobody. That is the most attack-resistant marker so far encountered in this collection, because there is no document to repeal and no external auditor with standing; and the moment such a class begins putting its arrangements into notarised contracts among itself, as the Dutch regents did from the later seventeenth century, the writing is evidence that the informal understanding has stopped working — which is a symptom to look for rather than a curiosity.

One further observation is entered here without being argued, because later modules will need it. The founding instrument specified a single fiscal space — one schedule of excises, at one rate, in every province, with no internal tariffs — and the signatories never built it, reverting instead to the inherited Habsburg practice of fixed provincial quotas. **Where a founding instrument prescribes a uniformity that its individual signatories are better off without, expect the inherited practice to survive under the new text, and read the ledger rather than the clause to find out what was actually agreed.**

A note on sources.

The Union of Utrecht of 23 January 1579 is quoted exactly, in the original sixteenth-century Dutch, from a full text of the treaty reproducing the standard edition; the translations of Articles I and IX are mine. Articles V, VI, VII, XIV, XV, XVIII, XIX and XXV are described from the same text rather than quoted, at the length the argument needed. The declaration on Article XIII of 1 February 1579 and the amplification of Article XV of the same date are likewise described from the text as printed. The list of accessions and their dates — Ghent on 4 February 1579 through Drenthe on 11 April 1580 — is from the Dutch national archive's description of the instrument, as is the note that the original act is held at Ghent and dated 29 January, while the copy in The Hague was signed on 2 or 3 February.

No other primary document is quoted. The resolution of the States of Holland of 19 July 1572 against the plundering of ecclesiastical goods and sequestering their income for the payment of preachers, and the resolution of 10 January 1577 bringing the parsonage incomes of the rural quarters under one receiver at Delft, are reported from Dutch regional and local historical accounts that summarise them; I have not seen the resolutions themselves, and the phrase describing the quarters — South Holland, Rijnland, Delfland, Schieland — is given as those accounts give it. The account of the Zeeland spiritual offices, the merger of three administrations in 1578, the sales of ecclesiastical goods in 1576 and 1579, and the schedule of what the offices paid for — including maintenance to Catholic clergy who remained and undertook not to propagate their religion, and from 1596 bursaries for theology students — follows the *Encyclopedie van Zeeland*. The Dordrecht government regulation of 1652 and its later relaxations are reported from a modern academic study of the Dordrecht regent class; the wording of the qualifications is that study's summary and not the ordinance's own.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms. The quota figures rest on De Vries and Van der Woude, who give Holland at about fifty-eight per cent of the total budget and note that because other provinces fell into arrears Holland often

paid more; the detailed 1612 apportionment quoted from an older English account — Holland 57.1, Friesland 11.4, Zeeland 11 falling to 9, Utrecht and Groningen 5.5, Overijssel 3.5 — differs slightly from the 1616 fixing given elsewhere, and both are reported here as the literature reports them rather than reconciled. The finding that the Union's provisions for uniform taxation at one rate and for the prohibition of discriminatory internal levies were never implemented is De Vries and Van der Woude's. Figures on burgher right — roughly a quarter of Amsterdam's inhabitants holding it, about eleven per cent of some seventy thousand immigrants between 1616 and 1630 purchasing it, and a price of the order of a few weeks' wages — are from the work of Erika Kuijpers and Maarten Prak as summarised in the Dutch literature, and are estimates. The dating of the *contracten van correspondentie* to the second half of the seventeenth century, with their high point in the eighteenth, follows the Dutch reference literature and the older studies of De Witte van Citters and Fruin on which it rests. The composition of the Amsterdam council formed on 29 May 1578 — thirty Calvinists and ten Catholics, with no one killed in the change of government — is as reported in the standard accounts of the *Alteratie*.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where wording or provenance could not be confirmed, the provision has been described rather than quoted.

MODULE 3

Principally in These Lands

The robe — a manifesto whose famous opening about princes made for their subjects is narrowed, four sentences later, to a claim about the oath sworn at a Brabant inauguration; a deposition that installs a French Catholic duke in the same document; a crescent-shaped badge worn by men who preferred the Turk to the Pope; and a constitutional history explaining that the arrangement was eight hundred years old, written in the year the last foreign prince gave up.

The problem, and how many audiences it had

By 1580 the men running the rebellion had held two provinces for eight years and had run out of the story they had begun with.

That story had been continuing loyalty. The towns had been taken in the King's name by his lawful stadholder; the war was against the Duke of Alba's tyranny, not against the sovereign; the anthem sung in the field had the Prince declaring that he had always honoured the King of Spain. It was serviceable for a long time and it had a natural expiry, which arrived on 15 March 1580 when Philip II signed a ban of proscription against William of Orange, published on 15 June. It declared him a traitor and enemy of the King and of the country, banished him perpetually, forbade all subjects to give him food, drink, fire or any other necessity, exposed him as an enemy of the human race, gave his property to whoever could seize it, and offered to anyone, subject or stranger, who should deliver him dead or alive or take his life, the sum of twenty-five thousand crowns and the habit of the Order of Santiago.

That is a legal instrument, and it required a legal answer. But it required more than one, because the men who needed answering were not one audience.

There were the magistrates and States of the provinces, who had joined the rising over a tax and a set of privileges and who included, in 1580, a great many Catholics with no interest whatever in deposing an anointed king. There was the Reformed minority and the men of the fleet, who were being asked to die and who would not do it for a constitutional argument. There was the Catholic population — probably a majority in the northern provinces still — whose quiescence was worth more than its conversion. And there were the foreign powers whose money, troops and recognition the rebellion could not survive without: the King of France and his brother, the Queen of England, the Lutheran princes of the Empire, and, at one remove, the Sultan.

What follows is the account of what each was told. None of the four versions contradicts the others in any way that mattered, for the simple reason that none of the four audiences was reading the others' copy.

The Prince's own answer, which is a nobleman's answer

Orange replied first, in his own name, and the document is worth reading for what it does *not* argue.

The *Apologie* was presented to the States General assembled at Delft on 13 December 1580 and published in February 1581; the author was probably his court chaplain, Loyseleur de Villiers. It is a savage personal attack on Philip and a defence of Orange's whole career, and its constitutional core is this: if the King is Duke of Brabant, then Orange is one of the principal members of Brabant by virtue of his baronies; the King took the duchy on an oath; the oath had conditions attached to the ducal rank; and the question put to the King is whether he remembers what he swore.

That is not a theory of popular sovereignty. It is a great vassal telling his lord that the lord has broken the terms on which the vassal accepted him, and it is addressed to men who would recognise the form of the argument because they were themselves parties to the same kind of instrument. Orange was a Knight of the Golden Fleece, an imperial prince in his own right through Orange, and one of the wealthiest landowners in the Netherlands. The robe he reached for first was the one his own position handed him.

The public act, and the sentence that governs it

Seven months later the States General published the instrument that has come down as the Dutch declaration of independence, dated at The Hague, 26 July 1581.

It opens with the passage everybody quotes:

> *Alsoo een yegelick kennelick is, dat een Prince van den lande van Godt gestelt is hooft over zijne ondersaten, om deselve te bewaren ende beschermen van alle ongelijk, overlast ende ghewelt gelijck een herder tot bewaernisse van zijne schapen: Ende dat d'ondersaten niet en sijn van Godt geschapen tot behoef van den Prince om hem in alles wat hy beveelt, weder het goddelick of ongoddelick, recht of onrecht is, onderdanig te wesen en als slaven te dienen: maer den Prince om d'ondersaten wille, sonder dewelcke hy egeen Prince en is...*

As it is known to everyone that a prince of the land is set by God as head over his subjects, to preserve and defend them from all wrong, oppression and violence, as a shepherd for the keeping of his sheep; and that the subjects are not created by God for the

prince's sake, to be obedient to him in everything he commands, whether godly or ungodly, right or wrong, and to serve him as slaves — but the prince for the subjects' sake, without whom he is no prince...

And it draws the conclusion: a prince who instead of protecting his subjects seeks to oppress them and to take from them their ancient freedom, privileges and old customs, and to command them as slaves, is to be held not as a prince but as a tyrant, and may by right and reason, particularly upon the deliberation of the States of the land, be no longer acknowledged as prince but forsaken, and another chosen in his place.

Read as a general proposition that is a very large claim, and it has been read that way for four hundred years. But the document does not leave it as a general proposition. Two sentences later it narrows it, and the narrowing clause is the one that actually does the work:

> *twelck principalick in dese voorsz. landen behoort plaetse te hebben ende stadt te grijpen, die van allen tijden zijn gheregeert geweest ende hebben ook moeten geregeert worden navolgende den eedt by heure Princen t'heuren aencome gedaen, na uutwijsen heurer privilegien, costumen ende ouden hercomen: hebbende oock meest alle de voorsz. landen haren Prince ontfangen op conditien, contrackten ende accoorden ende welcke brekende, oock nae recht den Prince van de heerschappye van den lande is vervallen.*

which ought principally to have place and take effect in these aforesaid lands, which have at all times been governed, and have also had to be governed, according to the oath sworn by their princes at their accession, as their privileges, customs and ancient usages set out; most of the said lands having also received their prince upon conditions, contracts and agreements, on the breaking of which the prince also forfeits by law the lordship of the land.

That is the whole architecture of the robe in one sentence, and it is the reverse of the way the document is usually read. The universal principle is the preamble. The operative warrant is a contract — specifically, the inauguration oath, which in Brabant meant a charter first sealed in 1356 and sworn by every duke since, containing an express clause releasing the subjects from all service if the duke broke it. The States are not appealing to the rights of man. They are suing on an instrument, and they are careful to say that the remedy they claim applies *principally in these lands*, because it arises from those lands' particular documents rather than from anything true everywhere.

Attend also to the grammar of the operative clause at the end of the act. The States do not say that they depose Philip. They declare him *ipso jure vervallen* — forfeited by

operation of law — of his lordship, right and inheritance in these lands, and consequently declare all officers, magistrates, vassals and inhabitants released from any oath they may have taken to him. A decree announces a decision; a law announces a discovery. This instrument is drafted as a finding of fact: the conditions were broken, the forfeiture followed automatically, and the States are merely recording what has already happened and issuing the consequential administrative orders. All the King's seals are to be surrendered within days; his name, title and arms are to appear on no coin, and a new gold and silver coinage is to be struck; every officer is to swear a new oath in the hands of the States of his province.

What the same document does next

And then, in the same act, having established that a people may forsake a tyrant and choose another head, the States General choose one. Most of the united lands, the text records, have placed themselves under the lordship and government of the illustrious Prince the Duke of Anjou, on certain conditions and points concluded with His Highness; Archduke Matthias has resigned the general government into the States' hands and they have accepted it; and until Anjou arrives, the name and title of the head and land council are to be used, save that in Holland and Zeeland the name of the Prince of Orange and the States of those lands shall be used until the land council is actually instituted.

The Duke of Anjou was the brother of the King of France and a Catholic.

It is worth pausing on how completely this cuts against the retrospective reading. The founding document of what became the first durable republic of modern Europe is not a republican document, does not propose a republic, and in the operative part installs a French Catholic prince as sovereign on conditions negotiated in advance. What it performs is not the abolition of monarchy but a change of employer, conducted in the idiom of a contract terminated for breach and re-let to a new party on terms.

The grievances, and what they were cut for

The bulk of the act is a bill of particulars, and its order is instructive.

The first grievance listed is not the persecution. It is the bishoprics of 1559 — and the complaint made in public in 1581 is precisely the complaint Granvelle had reported privately to the King twenty years earlier. The act says that the new bishops, endowed by the incorporation of the richest abbeys and provided with nine canons of whom three were to have charge of the inquisition, would through that incorporation have

held the first places and votes in the assembly of the States of these lands, and would have been the King's creatures, standing at his command and devotion.

That is a complaint about the composition of a chamber, printed as the leading article in a manifesto justifying the deposition of a king. It refines the usual expectation of this method, which is that the public reason and the private reason will differ. Here they are the same reason, stated openly, because in an order where the currency is offices and votes, a complaint about votes *is* a respectable constitutional grievance and needs no disguise.

The rest follows the same grain. The inquisition, which the act calls always as dreadful and odious in these lands as the utmost slavery itself. The sending of a foreign governor, not of the King's blood, contrary to the privileges. The castles built in the principal towns to hold them in subjection. The arrest of the great lords under colour of wanting their counsel, their removal out of Brabant contrary to the privileges, their trial before a judge who was not their competent judge, and their public and shameful execution. The confiscations. The hundredth, twentieth and tenth pennies — the tenth penny, the act says, forcibly imposed on merchandise and handicrafts to the utter ruin of a land that stands entirely upon merchandise and handicraft. The Spanish Fury at Antwerp, and the four hundred thousand guilders the burghers were made to raise to be rid of the soldiers. The intercepted letters showing that the King approved what his servants had done. And, at the end, the ban itself: the great sums set upon the Prince's life.

Conscience appears, and it is put in a specific place. The act says the King sought to tyrannise not only over his subjects' persons and goods but over their consciences, of which, they understood, no account was owed to anyone but God alone. That is one clause. The grievance list around it is constitutional, fiscal and military, and it is a list of things done to institutions and to property.

This is the robe cut for the magistrates, and it is a robe of privilege rather than of faith. It had to be, because the men it was addressed to included a great many Catholics whom the rebellion could not afford to lose and who would have thrown the document in the fire if it had been an argument for the true religion.

The other three robes

For the fighting men. There survives an object which is the whole of the second robe in a single piece of silver: a crescent-shaped badge, cast and tooled, of about 1570, inscribed LIVER TVRCX DAN PAVS on one side and EN DESPIT DE LA MES on the other — rather Turkish than Papist, in spite of the Mass. Beggar seamen wore these in their hats; the type is called the half-moon of Boisot after the admiral whose flotilla

came over the flooded fields into Leiden in October 1574. The shape is the crescent of the Ottoman Empire, worn deliberately, by Christians, in a European war of religion.

What it says is not a theology. It is a preference between two masters, expressed by adopting the emblem of a third whose reputation among these men was that under him nobody was killed for his religion. It is addressed to men who would have to board ships and take walls, and it works by supplying an identity and an enemy and nothing else. A magistrate weighing tax privileges and a sailor wearing a crescent were in the same rebellion, and neither was being paid in the other's coin.

For the Catholic third. The thirteenth article of the Union of Utrecht had already settled what the Catholic population would be told, and its wording repays attention. Holland and Zeeland are to order religion as they think fit; the other provinces may follow the religious peace already drafted, or may make such order as they find serviceable for the peace and welfare of the provinces and towns and the preservation of every person, spiritual and secular, in his goods and rights — *mits dat een yder particulier in sijn religie vrij sal moegen blijven ende dat men nyemant ter cause van de religie sal moegen achterhaelen ofte ondersoucken*: provided that every individual shall be free to remain in his religion, and that no one shall be pursued or examined on account of religion.

Read that for its reservation and for whose discretion it names. What is granted to the individual is freedom of conscience and freedom from investigation. What is not granted is public worship, and what is not disturbed is the province's authority to order the public church as it sees fit. It is an extraordinarily well-judged instrument, because the thing conceded — a man's inward belief — was never policeable at acceptable cost anyway, while the thing withheld cost the conceding party nothing and was the only thing that would have mattered institutionally. It bought the quiescence of a very large minority at a price the States could pay in full.

For the foreign courts. The act of 1581 is addressed to all who shall see it or hear it read, and it was printed and distributed. Its whole rhetorical form — the recital, the bill of particulars, the intercepted correspondence produced as evidence, the citation of the accession oath, the *ipso jure* finding — is that of a legal brief. It is written to be shown to men who would have to decide whether recognising these people was defensible, and whose own subjects would ask them why they were assisting rebels. The answer the brief gives is: these are not rebels; the contract was broken by the other party; the forfeiture is automatic; nothing has been done that was not already done to itself by the Crown of Spain.

The crown that nobody would take

Then the arrangement the document announced fell apart, and the sequence of failures is the most important fact in this module.

Anjou arrived, found that the conditions negotiated in advance left him almost no power, and in January 1583 attempted to seize Antwerp by force; the citizens killed his troops in the streets in what the Dutch remember as the French Fury. He withdrew and died the next year. On 10 July 1584 Balthasar Gérard, who had taken up the offer in the ban of 1580, shot Orange at Delft. The sovereignty was then offered to Henry III of France, who declined it, and to Elizabeth of England, who also declined it and instead concluded the Treaty of Nonsuch in August 1585 and sent the Earl of Leicester as governor-general with an English army. Leicester quarrelled with the States, tried to govern over them rather than through them, and left at the end of 1587.

Only then — after a French duke, a French king, an English queen and an English earl had each in turn been offered the thing and had refused it, botched it or been thrown off — did the United Provinces become a republic. They did not choose it. They arrived at it by elimination, in 1588, because there was nobody left to give it to.

That is the plainest possible instance of a proposition this framework holds and this case now sharpens: an apex cannot mint legitimacy, only borrow it from a currency its audience already honours. The Dutch spent seven years trying to borrow it from living princes, in the only form the courts of Europe would recognise, and could not get a lender.

Eight hundred years, written in 1587

What they did instead is the module's finding.

In 1587, the year Leicester failed, the States of Holland commissioned François Vranck, pensionary of Gouda and ally of the Land's Advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, to write an account of where the sovereignty of these provinces actually lay. The result — the *Corte Vertoninghe*, usually called the Deduction — was circulated in a large printing by Oldenbarnevelt in the name of the States General. Its argument was that for some eight hundred years the true sovereignty of Holland had lain not with the counts but with the nobles and the towns assembled in the States; that the counts had always held on that footing; and that the present arrangement was therefore not an innovation of any kind but the ancient constitution of the country, temporarily obscured.

Two things about that document should be held together.

The first is what it claims to describe. Vranck's "people" are not the population. They are the noble families and the substantial burgher families, the *vroedschappen* and the benches of aldermen — the men who sat in the councils that had opened the town gates in 1572 and had been co-opting their own successors ever since. What the Deduction says, in effect, is that the men who currently held the offices had always held the sovereignty. It is a description of the existing distribution of power, written as a history.

The second is its date. It was produced in the year the last foreign candidate failed, and one year before the States General became sovereign by default. Which is to say that this order's constitutional theory was written *after* its constitution, to explain a position arrived at by exhaustion — sixteen years after the floor was seized, fifteen after the Church's estate was sequestered, eight after the Union, six after the deposition.

The antiquity claimed is inversely related to the age of the thing. And that is not an accident, because antiquity is the one currency of legitimacy that requires no living party's consent. A prince can refuse to lend his name, as Henry III and Elizabeth both did. The past cannot refuse. When a rising has exhausted every contemporary source of warrant, the remaining move is to discover that no warrant was ever needed because nothing has changed — and the more recently the arrangement was in fact established, the more work that discovery has to do, and the older the pedigree it will claim.

The move was repeated with more scholarship a generation later. In 1610 Hugo Grotius published a treatise on the antiquity of the Batavian republic, arguing from Tacitus that the Batavians of the Rhine delta had possessed a free constitution of their own, that the Dutch were their heirs, and that the country had never lawfully been subject to arbitrary monarchy. By then the ancestry had been pushed back from eight hundred years to sixteen hundred.

Did anyone believe it?

The framework's discipline here is to split the question by level and to refuse mind-reading at either.

At the apex, the only available instrument is the deviation test, held as a probability and never as a verdict. Orange is the case, and his deviations run consistently in one direction. He was raised a Catholic at the imperial court, made a Knight of the Golden Fleece, one of the richest men in the Netherlands, and stadholder under the King at twenty-six — a man with everything to lose and no structural need to lose it. He lost it. His eldest son was seized at Louvain in 1568 and held in Spain for the rest of William's life. His estates were confiscated. He was declared an enemy of the human race with a price of twenty-five thousand crowns on his body. He was shot in his own house in

1584 and left his affairs encumbered. Whatever he was serving, it was not his advantage, and the direction of the break is the evidence. It reads sincere. It does not read as proof of any particular doctrine, since the doctrine he professed changed twice; what it shows is a man who valued something above both his formation and himself.

At the base, do not read minds; ask what the population actually did the last time the order's own authority made a determination that cost nothing to defy. Two such determinations are on the record twelve years apart, and the comparison is the finding.

In 1567 and 1568 the Council of Troubles condemned thousands, executed a thousand or so, confiscated the estates of the condemned, and beheaded two Knights of the Golden Fleece in the Grand Place at Brussels. The towns complied. Nobody rescued Egmont.

In 1580 the King made a determination of the same kind against the greatest man in the country: an outlaw, no food or fire to be given him, his property to whoever could take it, twenty-five thousand crowns and a knightly habit for his killer. It was published on 15 June and it was, in law, binding on every subject in the Netherlands. In Holland and Zeeland nothing whatever happened, except that the man it named went on governing and, six months later, read his answer to the States General at Delft. He was eventually killed — by a foreigner, acting alone, four years later.

Between those two dates the population did not acquire a doctrine. What it acquired was a different view of whose determinations it was obliged to act on, which is what a robe is for; and the change is visible in conduct without anyone's belief having to be inferred.

Reading the robe against the framework

The framework holds that the floor comes first and the belief is laid over it afterwards to make the force cheap; that legitimacy is always borrowed from a currency the relevant audience already honours; and that one floor commonly runs several robes at once, cut to different audiences who never compare copies. All three hold here, the last of them very strongly: the tax-privilege brief for the magistrates, the crescent badge for the fleet, the non-inquiry clause for the Catholics, and the legal brief for the foreign courts were running simultaneously in the same decade, and no contemporary appears to have found the combination strange.

Two refinements the case adds.

The first is the module's contribution. **Where an order cannot borrow legitimacy from any living authority, it borrows from the past — because antiquity is the only currency whose lender cannot refuse.** The United Provinces applied to Anjou, to Henry III, to Elizabeth and to Leicester, in that order, over seven years, and were

refused or failed by all four. In the year of the last refusal they commissioned a document explaining that the sovereignty had lain with the States for eight hundred years. The diagnostic that follows is usable on any case: **the antiquity an order claims for its constitution varies inversely with the constitution's actual age**, because the claim is doing more work the newer the thing is, and a study finding an unusually deep official pedigree should date the arrangement it justifies before believing it.

The second is about sequence. This collection's expectation is floor, then robe. What this case shows is that the robe has an internal order of its own, and that the order is set by which audience the apex cannot do without. In 1572 what circulated was not a doctrine at all but a claim of continuing loyalty, because what was needed that month was for Catholic magistrates to open gates. In 1581 what was published was a breach-of-contract brief, because what was needed that year was foreign recognition. In 1587 what was written was a constitutional history, because what was needed then was an explanation of why there was no prince. The doctrine came last, and it came last because a doctrine is the thing you write for yourself. **A robe built for an order that must explain itself abroad will be legal before it is doctrinal, because a foreign court can be satisfied by a brief and a congregation cannot** — and the reverse order should be expected in an order that answers to nobody outside.

One smaller thing is entered without argument. The gap this method looks for, between what is said in public and what is said in private, is not always there. The leading grievance in the manifesto of 1581 — that the new bishops would have taken the first votes in the assembly of the States and been the King's creatures — is word for word the motive Granvelle had privately attributed to the great nobles in 1561. Where an order's currency is offices and votes, a complaint about votes needs no disguise, because it is already in a form the audience regards as principled. **Look for the gap; but where it is absent, ask what the settlement made respectable, because a naked interest stated openly is evidence about what that order counted as a good reason.**

A note on sources.

Three passages of the Act of Abjuration of 26 July 1581 are quoted exactly in the original Dutch, from the text published by the Leiden *Dutch Revolt* project, which prints it from A. S. de Blécourt and N. Japikse's *Klein plakkaatboek van Nederland* (1919), no. XXII, itself taken from one of the oldest 1581 impressions, issued by Charles Silvius, sworn printer to the States of Holland. The translations are mine. The remaining provisions of the act described here — the tyranny clause, the *ipso jure* declaration, the release from oaths, the surrender of the King's seals, the prohibition on his name, title and arms appearing on the coinage, the new oath to be sworn to the

States of each province, the reference to the Duke of Anjou and to Archduke Matthias's resignation, and the whole bill of particulars including the bishoprics, the inquisition, the castles, the arrests out of Brabant, the tenth penny and the Antwerp ransom of four hundred thousand guilders — are described from the same text rather than quoted, at the length the argument needed. Article XIII of the Union of Utrecht is quoted in part from the full text of the treaty used earlier in this study.

The royal ban of 15 March 1580, published 15 June, is described and not quoted. An English rendering of it circulates widely; because I could not verify that rendering against the original French or Dutch text, its striking phrases — the exposure of Orange as an enemy of the human race, the grant of his property to whoever should seize it, the sum of twenty-five thousand crowns — are given here as the content of the instrument on the authority of the secondary accounts, and the habit of the Order of Santiago is reported on the same footing. The wording of the *Apologie* is not quoted at all: its argument from Orange's standing as a member of Brabant by his baronies, and its appeal to the King's accession oath, is paraphrased from the modern scholarly edition's summary. The presentation of the *Apologie* to the States General at Delft on 13 December 1580, its publication in February 1581, and the probable authorship of Loyseleur de Villiers are as the standard accounts give them; the attribution is not certain.

The Geuzen medal is described from the museum and numismatic literature: a cast and tooled silver crescent of about 1570, inscribed LIVER TVRCX DAN PAVS and EN DESPIT DE LA MES, of the type called the half-moon of Boisot from its use by the Beggar fleet at the relief of Leiden in 1574. The reading of the slogan as an appeal to Ottoman toleration as against Spanish persecution is the standard one in that literature and is reported as such rather than asserted as the wearers' state of mind.

François Vranck's *Corte Vertoninghe* or Deduction of 1587 is described and not quoted, from the Dutch literature on it: commissioned by the States of Holland, circulated by Oldenbarnevelt in the name of the States General, arguing that for some eight hundred years the sovereignty of Holland had rested with the nobles and towns in the States rather than with the counts, and understanding by "the people" the noble and substantial families, the *vroedschappen* and the aldermen. Grotius's treatise on the antiquity of the Batavian republic (1610) is named and its argument summarised, not quoted.

The sequence of failed sovereigns — Anjou's investiture, the French Fury at Antwerp of January 1583, his withdrawal and death in 1584, the assassination of Orange on 10 July 1584 by Balthasar Gérard, the refusal of Henry III, Elizabeth's refusal followed by the Treaty of Nonsuch of August 1585 and Leicester's

governorship, and Leicester's departure at the end of 1587 — follows the standard chronologies. The Council of Troubles figures used in the comparison at the end of the module are the ones set out earlier in this study, with the same ranges and the same caveats.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where wording or provenance could not be confirmed, the passage has been described rather than quoted.

MODULE 4

The Magistracy Shall Be Requested

Formation — a church that designed a complete apparatus for installing the cast of the world in a child from the age of six, and then had to ask the town councils to staff it; a Catholic third formed instead by an exiled bishop in Cologne, three hundred and sixty priests and a hundred and forty unmarried women teaching catechism in houses; and a union that could not agree with itself what day it was for a hundred and eighteen years.

What is actually being installed

Formation is not schooling, and reading it as schooling loses almost everything that matters about it.

What a formation installs in a child is the cast of his world: whose word he will take without checking, who counts as his people, what things are not to be weighed against advantage at all, and what story the whole arrangement is an episode in. It works because a human being cannot know his world first-hand — nobody can check more than a sliver of what he must believe — and so must run on trust, screening sources by cues rather than by verification: the marks of competence, the agreement of others, the sight of a man paying a real price for what he professes. Those filters are good ones. They are also readable, and what can be read can be supplied. Formation's particular power is timing: it reaches the child before the screening apparatus has matured, and by the time it has matured a whole life has been built on the foundation, so that revising it is not an update but a demolition.

Two consequences follow, and the second is the one this module turns on.

The first is that formation is never a priestly trick played on dupes. The man formed into a cast of authorities is doing exactly what any competent knower must do. He is not credulous; he is running on the only apparatus available to a mind in a world too big to check.

The second is that **there is no unformed person**. To be unformed is not to be neutral or free; it is to be feral, and nobody is. So the question a study asks of any order is never whether its population was formed. It is *by whom* — and where an order declines to form some part of its population, that part does not remain blank. Something else forms it, and the something else acquires a hold the state cannot later recover, because by the time the state notices, a generation exists whose cast of trusted authorities does not include it.

That is the frame. Now the Dutch case, which is unusual in this collection because the answer to *by whom* is not one party but four or five, running simultaneously, in the same streets.

The state that formed nobody

Begin with the negative fact, because it organises everything else.

The Republic had a public church and no state church. The Reformed Church was the only confession permitted to worship publicly, its ministers were paid from the sequestered Catholic endowment administered by the provincial spiritual offices, its buildings were the old parish churches, and its confession was the only one a man could profess and still hold office. But membership was voluntary. No one was compelled to join it, and a great many people did not: the estimate the scholarship converges on is that Protestant allegiance in the Republic as a whole reached something like half the population only around 1650, some seventy years after the Union.

Nor did the Generality reach children at all. It ran no schools, appointed no schoolmasters, prescribed no catechism and set no calendar. Under the thirteenth article of the Union each province ordered religion as it thought fit, and every individual was to remain free in his religion and not be pursued or examined on account of it. Below the province, the appointment of the schoolmaster belonged to the town or the village, along with everything else. There was no lever in the whole apparatus by which anyone at the centre could touch a child.

This was not a policy of forbearance and should not be read as one. It was the shape of the settlement: an order assembled out of towns that had defected one at a time, each retaining its own government, in which the currency was office and the boundary of the elite was drawn by the sitting members of a council. Such an order has no instrument for reaching into a household, because it has no instrument for reaching into a town.

The apparatus the church designed

The public church knew exactly what it wanted and designed it with care, and the design is worth setting out because it is a textbook formation machine.

In November 1618, in its seventeenth session, the Synod of Dort issued its decree on catechesis. It named a triple obligation — home, school and church — and graded the content by age. Dutch primary schooling ran roughly from six to twelve, in a single room, often the master's own house, the children grouped by ability and then by age. The youngest were to be prepared for the catechism by memorising the Ten

Commandments, the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer. The middle group took one of the shortened forms of the catechism the Synod approved. The oldest took the full Heidelberg Catechism of 1563, and — this is the detail that shows the design — their week's portion was tied to the Lord's Day scheduled for the catechism sermon in church on the following Sabbath, and the schoolmaster led them there, where they answered questions on it in front of the whole congregation. The master was to spend at least two days a week on it, and to teach according to each child's capacity, not merely setting matter to be memorised but making sure the child understood.

The Synod also specified who might do it. In this office none were to be employed but members of the Reformed Church, holding certificates of an upright faith and a pious life and well versed in the truths of the catechism; they were to sign a document professing belief in the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism and promising to instruct the youth accordingly.

Test that against the five things a formation has to install and it scores on every one. The marked authority is doubled — the minister in the pulpit and the master in the room, each certified by a body that has vouched for him. The coalition is made physical: the child is examined *in front of the congregation*, so that knowing his lesson and belonging to his people are the same performance, and failing at it is a public expulsion in miniature. The sacred content is the catechism itself, the material that is not up for negotiation. The story is the covenant history, delivered as narrative before any faculty exists that could weigh a proposition. And the timing is six to twelve, which is to say before the screening apparatus has matured at all.

It is a good machine. The Synod had the authority to design it and no authority whatever to run it, and its own decree says so in the sentence this module takes its name from: *the Christian magistracy shall be requested* that well-qualified persons be employed and enabled to devote themselves to the service, and especially that the children of the poor be taught free and not shut out of the schools.

Requested. Not directed, not required — requested, from a body outside the church, which alone could appoint, pay and dismiss.

And consider when it was written. The Synod of Dort sat with the backing of the States General and under the protection of Prince Maurice, who had spent the preceding months marching from town to town deposing Arminian magistracies and replacing them; Oldenbarnevelt was executed on the Binnenhof on 13 May 1619 while the Synod was still sitting. This is the Dutch Reformed Church at the absolute apex of its political power, having just seen its opponents purged from the councils by soldiers — and at that moment, drafting the one document that would have given it the nation's children, it could do no more than ask the magistrate to appoint the master.

That is the settlement showing through the doctrine. In an order where every office is in the gift of a town council, a church cannot form a people, because forming a people requires appointing about ten thousand men and the church appoints none of them.

What the household did instead

The formation that did take, and took thoroughly, ran through the house rather than the state, and it is visible in three things.

The first is literacy, which was the highest in Europe and unusually extended to women. In Amsterdam in 1630 something like fifty-seven per cent of bridegrooms and thirty-two per cent of brides could sign the marriage register; by 1680 the figures had risen to roughly seventy and forty-four per cent. Signature rates are a crude proxy and these are estimates, but the direction and the gap between the Republic and its neighbours are not in doubt, and girls were in the schools.

The second is the book they read. The States General had commissioned a new translation of the Bible at Dort, and the *Statenvertaling* appeared at Leiden in 1637. It became the most widely read book in the language, and its use was domestic and daily rather than ecclesiastical: the day opened and closed with it, and meals were marked by it. A state that could not appoint a schoolmaster had nonetheless put a text into tens of thousands of households which was read aloud by the head of the house twice a day for two centuries.

The third is the manual. Jacob Cats published *Houwelick* in 1625 and something on the order of fifty thousand copies had sold by 1655 — an enormous figure for a country of under two million. It runs through a woman's life in six stages, maid, sweetheart, bride, housewife, mother, widow, telling her in verse what each requires, and it is only the most successful of a genre; his emblem books furnished the language with proverbs that were still household currency two centuries later, which is why he is called Father Cats. Cats was twice Grand Pensionary of Holland.

Read those three together and the portrait of the good subject emerges, and it is not the portrait a church would have drawn. He is a householder. He is married, literate, industrious, sober, orderly in his accounts, dutiful to his town, and the head of a household in which a book is read aloud and children are taught. Religion is present and it is domestic. What is almost entirely absent from the portrait is the state: no oath of national allegiance, no military service, no prince to love, no nation to die for. The unit the Dutch order formed people into was the house, and after that the town.

This matters because it explains what the Republic could and could not later ask of people. An order that has formed householders can raise excise on beer and bread

almost indefinitely, because a householder pays what the house owes. It cannot raise a national conscript army, and it never tried.

Where the church did not reach

Now the part of the population the public church never formed, and what formed it instead — which is the mechanism this module exists to demonstrate.

When the towns went over in 1572 the priests fled, went into hiding, or changed trade; one early organiser reckoned around 1600 that there were only some seventy priests left in the whole of the northern provinces. All the bishops were gone. On any reasonable expectation that population should have drifted into the public church within a generation, since it had no clergy, no buildings, no schools, no legal worship and no route to office.

It did not. A Delft priest from a regent family, Sasbout Vosmeer, was made vicar general in 1583 and apostolic vicar in 1592, consecrated bishop in 1602, and from 1603 ran the whole operation from exile in Cologne. What he built came to be called the Holland Mission. By 1631 it numbered some three hundred and sixty priests and about a hundred and forty *klopjes*, and it ministered to something like four hundred and fifty thousand Catholics. In some provinces Catholics were perhaps two-fifths of the population in the 1620s. Worship ran in *schuilkerken* — hidden churches behind ordinary house fronts, without steeples or bells.

The *klopjes* are the instrument that repays the closest attention. They were unmarried laywomen, living in houses, who catechised children, prepared them for the sacraments, kept the community's links to the priest, and held the whole thing together in the intervals when there was no priest at all. Against them the States had no instrument. A priest can be arrested, a chapter dissolved, a building closed, a benefice confiscated, a name struck off a register. A woman teaching children in her own kitchen appears on no list, holds no office, occupies no building the magistrate can seize, and cannot be deposed because she was never appointed.

The arrangement under which this ran was purchased and local. At Delft the understanding was that so long as Catholics were discreet and the sheriffs continued to be paid, they were left alone; the same pattern of paid connivance recurs across the Republic. Which means that the Catholic formation of Catholic children was in practice a licensed activity, and the licence was bought annually from a local officer — an arrangement that suited both sides and left the province's law entirely intact on the page.

Two things about this are worth stating plainly.

The first is that the rival authority appeared very fast. The framework's expectation, drawn from cases where a conqueror withheld formation, is that a rival authority with an address turns up within about a generation. Here it was faster: the towns went over in 1572, Vosmeer was vicar general in 1583, and the apostolic vicariate was erected in 1592 — twenty years. And the address was outside the Republic's reach, in the archbishopric of Cologne, which is precisely why the States could not touch it.

The second is that nothing was withheld deliberately in the colonial sense. Nobody in Holland reasoned that forming Catholics as Reformed would oblige them to admit Catholics to office. The public church wanted them badly and preached at them for two centuries. What prevented it was not a decision but an incapacity — the same incapacity that made it ask the magistrate to appoint the schoolmaster. And the result was the same as if it had been a decision: the formation that had been running before 1572 went on running, adapted itself to clandestinity, and held its people.

The other communities did the same on a smaller scale. The Mennonites, already split into six or so confessional blocs by the 1590s, formed their children into a cast that included no oath, no office and no arms. The Lutherans had their congregations, the Remonstrants theirs after their expulsion in 1619. In Amsterdam the Portuguese Jewish community built its own schooling, and the Republic left it alone. Every one of these supplied a full cast — an authority whose word was taken without checking, a people, a set of things not to be traded, and a story — and every one of them supplied it to children.

The year that would not agree with itself

The calendar is the load-bearing item of any formation, because it is the thing that decides what a person's year *is*: when he works and rests, when he feasts and fasts, which days carry weight, and, at the deepest level, what day it is right now. A hierarchy can be made to concede obedience in a season. A village's year moves very slowly and against great resistance.

The Dutch Republic could not agree on one for a hundred and eighteen years.

Pope Gregory XIII decreed the reform of the calendar in February 1582. Zeeland, Brabant and the States General adopted it that December, 14 December being followed by 25 December. Holland adopted it at the turn of the year, the sources differing over the exact days dropped. Groningen followed in February 1583 — and then, in the summer of 1594, went back to the Julian calendar.

And there it stopped, for over a century. Gelderland finally adopted the new style on 30 June 1700, the next day being 12 July. Utrecht and Overijssel followed on 30 November 1700, the next day being 12 December. Friesland and Groningen changed

at the end of that year, 31 December 1700 being followed by 12 January 1701. Drenthe was last, on 30 April 1701, the next day being 12 May.

So from 1583 to 1701 the United Provinces ran two calendars. A merchant travelling from Amsterdam to Zwolle changed the date by ten days on the way, and back again on the way home; a letter from Leeuwarden to The Hague crossed a gap of a week and a half; contracts and depositions from the period have to be read with the writer's province in mind before the date means anything. Some documents are double-dated, but that was rare.

The reason is the whole point. The Gregorian calendar was a papal instrument. To adopt it was, in the eyes of the more thoroughly Reformed inland provinces, to receive an ordinance from Rome, and they would not. Holland and Zeeland had taken it in 1582 partly because the reform arrived while the States General were still nominally acting in the King's name, and partly for a reason no consistory could argue with: merchants keeping accounts with Antwerp, Hamburg and Danzig needed to be writing the same date as their correspondents. The commercial provinces changed their year for the ledger; the confessional provinces refused to change theirs for the Pope; and the union which the Act of 1579 had bound together *as if they were but one province* did not, for four generations, put its members in the same week.

Two findings sit in that. The first is a confirmation, at unusual strength, of the proposition that the calendar is the deepest item and the one an order finds hardest to move: here, provinces that would send money and men to a common army for a century would not accept a common date, because the date was confessional and the money was not. The second is the diagnostic. **An order that cannot unify its calendar has not formed a common people, whatever its constitution says** — and this one can be dated to the day. It began to have a single year on 12 May 1701, a hundred and twenty-two years after the Union of Utrecht and forty-seven years before its own last great constitutional crisis.

Four casts in one street

Put it together and the shape of Dutch formation by the middle of the seventeenth century is clear, and it has no parallel elsewhere in this collection.

A child in a Holland town was formed completely — as completely as a child anywhere — into one of several parallel casts occupying the same streets. Reformed: minister, consistory, catechism twice a week at school, the Sunday afternoon catechism sermon, the public examination before the congregation, and a Bible read aloud at home morning and evening. Catholic: a priest whose presence in the town was purchased from the sheriff, mass in a room behind a canal-house front, and a *klopje*

who taught the children their catechism in a kitchen. Mennonite: a congregation that swore no oaths, held no offices and carried no arms, and which disciplined its own. Lutheran, Remonstrant, and in Amsterdam Sephardi and Ashkenazi, each with its own instruction, its own year and its own authorities.

Each of these delivered the full package: whose word to take without checking, who your people are, what is not for sale, what story you are in. None of them could form the others' children. And the state formed none of them.

The political consequence is the thing to carry forward, and it is exact. Members of dissenting churches were barred from public office. Which means that the boundary of formation and the boundary of the settlement were the same line: the qualification laid down for an alderman of Dordrecht in 1652 — thirty years old, a born burgher or married into one, assessed at twenty thousand guilders — begins with *Reformed*. A confession was a career qualification. So these were not merely religious communities living side by side; they were the load-bearing structural divisions of the order, and everyone knew which side of the line his children were being raised on.

Anyone who has looked at the modern Netherlands will recognise the shape. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries called it *verzuiling*, pillarisation: a society organised into parallel, internally complete, confessionally defined columns, each with its own schools, press, associations and politics, coexisting without merging. The columns were built in the nineteenth century. The ground they were built on was laid between 1572 and 1620, when a state that could not form its own population let four or five formations run at once and made the boundary between them the boundary of office.

Reading formation against the framework

The framework's established finding is that withheld formation is delegated formation: where a conqueror refuses to form a population — because forming them as his own would oblige him to admit them — the formation already running simply holds the field, and the delegate acquires an authority the delegator cannot recover. That is a colonial mechanism and it holds firmly wherever it has been tested.

This case is not that, and the difference is the module's contribution. Nobody in the Dutch Republic withheld formation as policy. The public church wanted the whole population and preached for it without pause for two centuries; the withholding was an incapacity, not a decision, and its cause was structural — an order in which every schoolmaster is appointed by a town council cannot form a nation, because the centre has no lever that reaches a child. And what resulted was neither a vacuum nor the survival of one prior formation, but something the collection has not previously had in view.

Where an order privileges one formation without being able to compel it, and forbids none outright, the population neither converges on the privileged formation nor remains unformed: it sorts into parallel formation-communities, each supplying a complete cast of authorities to its own children, and the boundaries between those communities become the durable structural fault lines of the order. The diagnostic tell is the one visible here in 1652: when the boundary of formation and the boundary of office-holding become the same boundary, the confessions have stopped being religious groupings and have become the constitution.

A second statement follows from this, and it is a refinement of the reformist conclusion this framework reaches everywhere — that the only liberty actually available is a crowded seam, many contending authorities rather than one, so that the trust nobody can escape is at least made to answer.

The Dutch Republic had, by the middle of the seventeenth century, one of the most crowded seams in Europe. Reformed, Catholic, Mennonite, Lutheran, Remonstrant and Jewish authorities all operated in the same towns; the press was the freest on the continent; no single hand owned what a Dutchman could be told. That is real and it is not small.

But it must be measured at the right level, and the case shows why. **A crowded seam at the level of a society is entirely compatible with a captured seam at the level of every household in it.** The Catholic child in Utrecht in 1650 was formed in a single cast, by a single set of authorities, as completely and as early as any child in Castile; the fact that a Mennonite family lived three doors down did not crowd *his* seam at all, because he was six and the Mennonites were not in his house. Plurality between households and monopoly inside them are different facts about the same street, and an order can have the first in full measure and none of the second.

So: measure the seam twice. **Crowded at the scale of the order is a fact about what an adult may encounter and compare; crowded at the scale of the household is a fact about what a child is given before he can compare anything — and the second is where formation happens.** The liberty the crowded seam buys is real, but it is bought for the adult who may defect, and the price of defection in an order where confession is a career qualification is precisely the thing the settlement was designed to make expensive.

One last observation, entered without argument. The Dutch crowded seam was not designed. It was the residue of a settlement too weak to enforce a single formation, arrived at by provinces that would have imposed uniformity had any of them been able to. **A crowded seam can be a by-product of weakness rather than a work of principle, and it is not less real for that** — but an order that owes its plurality to

incapacity rather than to conviction will defend it only as long as the incapacity lasts, which is a thing to watch for when the incapacity begins to end.

A note on sources.

No primary text is quoted exactly in this module, and the reason should be stated. The decree of the Synod of Dort on catechesis, from which the phrase in this module's title is taken — that the Christian magistracy shall be requested that well-qualified persons be employed, and especially that the children of the poor be taught free — reaches me only through the standard English translation of the Church Order of Dort as reproduced in the Reformed devotional and educational literature. I have not verified that wording against the Latin or Dutch original, and it is therefore used as a report of what the article provides rather than as a quotation of what it says. The same caution applies to the provisions described here on the three age grades, the requirement that schoolmasters be members of the Reformed Church holding certificates of upright faith and pious life, the subscription to the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, the two days a week, and the leading of the oldest pupils to the Sabbath catechism sermon to be examined before the congregation: all are described from that translation and from modern summaries of the Synod's seventeenth session of November 1618, and the fact that they are unverified against the original is the defect of this module.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms. The estimate that Protestant allegiance reached roughly half the Republic's population only around 1650 is Jonathan Israel's, as reported in the review literature, and is contested at its edges. The figures for the Holland Mission — some three hundred and sixty priests and about a hundred and forty *klopjes* serving roughly four hundred and fifty thousand Catholics by 1631 — are from recent scholarship in *Church History and Religious Culture*; the appointment of Sasbout Vosmeer as vicar general in 1583 and apostolic vicar in 1592, his consecration as bishop in 1602 and his operation from Cologne from 1603 follow the standard accounts, which differ slightly over whether the vicariate dates from 1592 or from his consecration; the estimate of only about seventy priests remaining in the northern provinces around 1600 is a contemporary organiser's claim reported in the modern literature and should be treated as an order of magnitude. The Delft arrangement of discretion and payment to the sheriffs is as reported in the local literature. That Catholics were around forty per cent of the population in some provinces by the 1620s is an estimate and varies sharply by province.

Literacy figures — roughly fifty-seven per cent of Amsterdam bridegrooms and thirty-two per cent of brides signing the marriage register in 1630, rising to about

seventy and forty-four per cent by 1680 — are from the secondary literature, are signature-based proxies rather than measures of reading ability, and are estimates. The sale of some fifty thousand copies of Cats's *Houwelick* by 1655 is as given in the reference literature. The publication of the *Statenvertaling* at Leiden in 1637 and its domestic use are as the standard accounts describe them.

The calendar dates are given as the genealogical and calendrical reference literature gives them, and the sources disagree in detail. Zeeland, Brabant and the States General are generally given as 14 December 1582 followed by 25 December; Holland appears variously as 1 January 1583 followed by 12 January, and as 21 December 1582 followed by 1 January 1583, and this module does not attempt to resolve that; Groningen as February 1583 with a reversion to the Julian calendar in the summer of 1594. The later adoptions are more consistently reported: Gelderland 30 June 1700 followed by 12 July; Utrecht and Overijssel 30 November 1700 followed by 12 December; Friesland and Groningen 31 December 1700 followed by 12 January 1701; Drenthe 30 April 1701 followed by 12 May. The interpretation offered here — that the inland provinces refused the reform because it was papal and the maritime provinces accepted it because their correspondents used it — is the standard explanation in that literature and is reported as such.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where wording or provenance could not be confirmed, the provision has been described rather than quoted, and the defect recorded.

MODULE 5

My Hand Is Stern, but My Heart Is Kind

The cost column — why an ordinary man complied, asked separately of the Leiden weaver with the highest real wage in Europe, the Brabant peasant taxed by an assembly he could not sit in, the German boy who signed away two years' pay to a lodging-house keeper before he ever saw a ship, and the Bandanese in 1621, for whom the question did not arise; and what it means that all four ledgers were kept by the same men, in the same rooms, on the same afternoons.

Why the question has to be asked more than once

The question this module exists to answer is the plainest one in the framework. For an ordinary person under this order — not a regent, not a minister, not a director — why does the ledger come out against defiance? What does he get for compliance, what would defiance cost him, could he leave, and who besides the state would punish him for stepping out of line?

Everywhere else in this collection the question can be asked once and answered with a range: a core and a periphery, a favoured caste and a burdened one. Here it cannot, because the Dutch Republic held populations whose answers were not merely different but opposite, and held them simultaneously, under one set of institutions, decided by the same few hundred men.

At one end of that range stood a man who was probably the best-off ordinary worker in Europe, who could not be arrested by any lord, who could move town at will, whose town relieved him if he fell sick, and against whom the state deployed almost no visible force at all. At the other end stood a population which was, within the space of a few months in 1621, killed, enslaved and deported, and whose islands were then re-let to Dutch planters worked by imported slaves.

Both are the Dutch Republic. Neither is a qualification of the other. So the module asks the question five times, from five positions, and only then draws the total.

The best ledger in Europe

Start with the man the Republic is usually described through: a wage-earner in a Holland town in, say, 1650 — a weaver in Leiden, a shipwright on Zaan, a porter in Amsterdam.

His benefit column is genuinely full, and it is worth being exact about what is in it rather than gesturing at prosperity.

He is not a serf, and there is nobody in the country who is. There is no seigneurial court that can try him, no lord's mill he must use, no permission required to marry or move. He can leave his town for another town in the morning. His wage was, through the first half of the seventeenth century, among the highest in Europe and by mid-century the Dutch standard of living was probably the highest anywhere. His bread came from the Baltic through a market his own province organised, and although grain crises came — the late 1690s were severe, with Amsterdam rye prices more than doubling — food riots were rare in the Republic before the end of the seventeenth century, which is a strong indicator in a period when they were common everywhere else. If he fell out of work or fell ill, his town had a relief apparatus better developed than any other in Europe; if he was a burgher and died, his orphans went to the burgher orphanage rather than to a worse one.

The force pointed at him is remarkably thin. The Republic maintained a large standing army, and it stood on the frontier and in the fortress towns, not in the streets of Haarlem. The body that kept order inside the walls was the *schutterij*, the burgher militia — his neighbours, the men he drank with, guaranteed by the founding treaty of 1579, which bound the magistrates to maintain the militia companies of every town in the Union. There was no political police, no internal passport, no register of the population, and no garrison in Leiden pointed at Leiden.

Now the other side of his ledger, because it is not empty. He paid the heaviest indirect taxes in Europe, and they fell on exactly what he consumed: beer, milled grain, salt, peat, meat, soap. The Union's own founding article had specified excises on wine, beer, the milling of corn, salt and cloth as the common revenue. The milled-grain excise, collected through heavily regulated bakers, came to furnish something like a tenth of all Dutch public revenue and went on doing so into the nineteenth century. A poor family could be spending half its income or more on bread, and a share of that was tax. He had no vote in anything; his town council co-opted itself, and if he was Catholic or Mennonite he could hold no office at all.

That is the ledger, and it comes out heavily positive, and it is worth naming precisely why.

Held by benefit, not by belief

The framework's expectation is that a cheap hold means one of two things: a belief driven deep enough that people enforce the order on themselves, or a threat credible enough that nobody tests it. The Dutch domestic hold was very cheap. It was not cheap for either of those reasons.

It was not belief. There was no national formation in this order and no apparatus capable of installing one — no state schools, no state church with compulsory membership, no common catechism, and, for a hundred and eighteen years, not even a common date. What a Dutch child was formed into was a household, a town and a congregation, in that order. There is no evidence of an installed conviction that the Republic as such was the rightful order of the world, and no institution that could have installed one.

Nor was it terror. The visible coercive apparatus inside Holland was small, and where it existed it was local.

What held it was the benefit column. A man who eats better than his cousin in Westphalia, earns more than his cousin in Kent, cannot be flogged by a lord, can move house without asking, and will be relieved if he falls sick, does not need to believe anything about the constitution to decline to risk his position. He is not a dupe and he has not been persuaded of anything. He has done the arithmetic, and the arithmetic is correct.

This is worth stating as a finding rather than a description, because it has a consequence the rest of the study will need. **A belief is a sunk cost and a benefit is a running one.** An order held by formation can survive a bad decade, because what holds it was installed in childhood and does not reprice. An order held by benefit reprices continuously, and its crises will track wages, grain and trade rather than doctrine. So the prediction for this case is that Dutch popular disturbance should follow the price of bread and the state of the war, arrive without any programme, and evaporate when the material conditions change — and that is very close to what the record shows: the crowds of 1672, the risings of 1747 and 1748, the tax-farmers' riots. None of them proposed a different constitution. They proposed cheaper bread and different men.

The hand that was stern

For those who fell out of the benefit column, the Republic built something, and it is the sharpest domestic instrument in the case.

In 1596 Amsterdam converted the former convent of the Poor Clares on the Heiligeweg into a *tuchthuis* — a house of correction — for young male vagrants, beggars and petty offenders. In 1602 the city granted it the monopoly of rasping brazilwood, and inmates were set to grating the logs into red dye powder with multi-bladed rasps, work which was both punitive and profitable; the institution sold the dye to the cloth trade. It became known as the Rasphuis. Women went to the Spinhuis, to

spin. Inmates could be as young as ten and were admitted for anything from begging to murder. Religious instruction was compulsory and there was corporal punishment.

Two things about this belong in the ledger.

The first is that it is not a prison in the medieval sense. It is a machine for converting the idle poor into labour, and it was widely admired: foreign visitors came to look, and the Rasphuis portal was given an elaborate sculpted front by Hendrick de Keyser. The Republic did not display its coercion on a scaffold. It displayed it as an improving institution with a handsome door.

The second is the inscription that was placed over the Spinhuis entrance, written by the poet P. C. Hooft, which tells the passer-by not to be afraid: it does not take vengeance for evil but compels to good; the hand is stern but the heart is kind.

That is the whole domestic posture of this order in one sentence, carved where anyone could read it. The threat is real, the labour is compulsory, the inmates are children as well as murderers — and the message on the door is addressed not to them but to the passing burgher, and it is an assurance that this is correction rather than punishment. The Dutch order coerced with an explanatory plaque.

Note also who was inside. Vagrants and beggars: which is to say, people who had no place in the benefit column. An order held by benefit has a specific residual problem — the people the benefit does not reach — and this is what it built for them.

Inside the Republic, outside the settlement

Now the population that is usually left out of the domestic account entirely, and it was very large.

The Generality Lands — States' Brabant, States' Flanders, States' Limburg and the Overmaas, Maastricht, Wedde and Westerwolde — amounted to something like a third of the Republic's territory. They had been taken by conquest in the later stages of the war and confirmed to the Republic at Münster in 1648, and the States General held sovereignty in them expressly on the right of conquest. They were not provinces. They had no seat in the States General, no vote, and no provincial estates: Brabant and Flanders, which had possessed their own States under the Habsburgs, lost them. Their towns petitioned repeatedly for admission as a full province and were refused, including during the stadholderless period, because admitting a populous Catholic territory would have altered the balance in the assembly.

They were overwhelmingly Catholic, in an order where public Catholic worship was forbidden and Catholics could hold no office. And they were taxed by the body that governed them and in which they were not represented.

Set that against the manifesto of 1581. The bill of particulars against Philip II included the appointment of a foreign governor over the privileges, the placing of garrisons and castles in the towns to hold them in subjection, the imposition of a tenth penny without consent, and the tyrannising over the consciences of subjects who owed account to God alone. Sixty-seven years later the same body was governing a third of its own territory on exactly those terms, and had written down the ground on which it did so: conquest.

The cost column of a Brabant peasant is therefore quite different from the Leiden weaver's. He has no vote at any level. His church is illegal and his worship is tolerated where a local officer permits it and is paid. He pays excises set by an assembly he cannot enter. He has, however, the same absence of serfdom, the same personal freedom of movement, and a good deal of practical connivance — and no realistic instrument of resistance whatever, because the army that had conquered him remained in the fortresses that had done it. He complied because there was nothing else on the menu, and because the order's demands on him were fiscal and confessional rather than corporal.

The man who signed before he sailed

Now the largest single body of men the Republic disposed of, and one of the harshest bargains in early modern Europe.

Between 1595 and 1795 the East India Company and its predecessors fitted out something over 4,700 ships for Asia, and something approaching a million men sailed on them. Roughly one in three came home. Around forty per cent of the sailors and sixty per cent of the soldiers were not from the Republic at all, but from Germany above all, and from Scandinavia and the rest of northern Europe.

That last figure matters enormously and it is the reading of the exit dial this case demands. The Republic was not somewhere people escaped from. It was where they arrived. The exit dial ran *inward*: for a poor young man in Westphalia or Jutland, Holland was the better arrangement, and he walked toward it. What he found when he arrived is the other half of the mechanism.

He needed lodging and kit and had neither. The trade that met him was the *volkhouder* — the dealer in personnel, the boarding-house keeper — who took him in, fed him, clothed him, and had him sign a *ceel* or *transportbrief*, a written authority assigning part of his future Company wages. The Company advanced two months' pay on engagement, on the order of twenty guilders, and that went straight to the keeper. Kit and months of miserable lodging could be charged at very much more. Because the keeper could not wait years for the wages to be paid in Asia, he sold the paper at a

discount to speculators, the *ceelkopers* — and from *ceel* the trade acquired, by a pun on *ziel*, the name it is remembered by: *zielverkopers*, soul-sellers, and soul-buyers.

The mechanism, stated flatly: a man was indebted before he embarked, his debt was a tradable security, and the security's value depended on whether he lived. He served three to five years, or ten if he was young, and received the balance of his pay only on return. The navy ran a comparable system, the wages going to the crimp until the accumulated debts were cleared; and when that failed to produce enough men, the government embargoed outgoing shipping, which threw the port towns' seamen out of work and made them available.

His cost column, then, looks like this. Benefit: a wage, food, and the chance — real, and sometimes taken — of coming back with something. Cost of defection: at sea, the Company's own justice, which hanged; ashore in Asia, the Company's own courts, its own garrisons, and no way home except in a Company ship. Exit: none, from the day the ship cleared the Texel until he stood in Amsterdam again with two chances in three of not doing so. Social pressure: none that bound him, because he was mostly a foreigner among foreigners.

And note what has happened to the framework's two dials. The credibility of force and the availability of exit are usually independent variables. On a ship they are the same variable, and the ship is where a third of a million men died.

Where there was no benefit column at all

At the far end of the same order the question this module asks does not apply, and saying why is the module's obligation.

In 1621 Jan Pieterszoon Coen took a fleet to the Banda Islands, the only source of nutmeg and mace in the world, with something like 1,600 soldiers, Japanese mercenaries, Javanese prisoners and slaves. The Bandanese population before the conquest is generally put at around fifteen thousand. What followed over the campaign and its aftermath — killing, starvation in the hill forts, flight, deportation and enslavement — removed almost all of them; the modern estimates converge on something like fourteen thousand dead, enslaved or driven off, with perhaps a thousand of the remainder deported to Batavia. Forty-odd *orang kaya* who came in to surrender were beheaded and quartered and their remains displayed. The figures are contested in every particular and are given here as the range the literature offers.

Then the islands were re-let. Under the *perkenier* system the VOC granted the nutmeg groves to Dutch planters, who worked them with slaves imported for the purpose. The population that had been cleared was replaced by a population that had been bought.

That is the extraction fork at its cleanest. Where an order takes a *flow* — a harvest, a rent, a labour service — it needs the producer alive and tunes the rate to keep him so. Where it takes a *stock* — the ground itself, or a monopoly that requires the ground be held by nobody else — there is no rate to tune, and the equilibrium the framework calls "just enough" does not exist. Coen was not extracting from the Bandanese at an unsustainable rate. He was removing them, because what the Company wanted was not their surplus but their islands, and the two are different operations.

In the Atlantic the same order carried, over the whole period, something on the order of half a million Africans into slavery, of whom something like three hundred thousand and more went to Suriname and the Guianas. There the cost column is not a ledger at all: there is no benefit term, the cost of defiance is death, and the only instrument available is exit.

And exit was used. By the eighteenth century something like one in ten of the enslaved people of Suriname had fled into the interior and joined or founded maroon communities. The colony fought them for decades and could not close the door, and in 1760 and 1762 the Republic's colonial government concluded treaties with the Ndyuka and the Saramaka recognising their freedom and their territory.

Those treaty dates are the sharpest single reading in this module. **A state that signs a treaty with people who have escaped it has formally recorded that its floor does not reach**, and the record is dated. The order that could not be left at its centre because nobody wanted to leave could not be held at its edge because too many did.

What the whole ledger looks like

Set the five positions side by side.

The Leiden weaver: full benefit column, almost no visible force, exit available and unattractive, social enforcement by neighbours. Complies because the arithmetic favours it.

The Brabant peasant: no political benefit, no representation, an illegal church tolerated for a price, taxed by strangers, no instrument of resistance, and a garrison in the fortress. Complies because there is nothing else.

The Amsterdam vagrant: outside the benefit column, and therefore inside the Rasphuis, rasping brazilwood under a portal that assures the public it is being improved.

The German boy on an East Indiaman: indebted before departure, his debt a tradable paper, no exit at all for years, one chance in three of not returning.

The Bandanese in 1621: no ledger, because the operation was removal rather than extraction.

Every one of these was decided in the same country by the same class of men, and in several cases by the same men on the same day. The directors who set the Company's Asian policy sat in the chambers of towns whose councils fixed the excise on the weaver's beer. The States General that refused Brabant a vote was the body that chartered the Company. There is no separate colonial elite in this study to blame; the study cannot even construct one, because the Republic did not have one.

Reading the cost column against the framework

Two contributions, one large and one to be carried forward.

The framework's instruments for this module — the credibility of the enforcer, the availability of exit, the thick and thin ends of the belief gradient — are all built to be read off a single population. This case shows that the level of a cost column is much less informative than its **variance**, and that the variance is the thing to measure.

A single order can run the lowest coercion in Europe at its centre and among the highest anywhere at its periphery, at the same time, through the same institutions, without the two settings ever being brought into comparison — because comparison requires somebody standing in a position from which both are visible, and such a position can be engineered out of existence. In this case it was, by two devices. The first is distance: the Amsterdam burgher was six months' sailing from Banda and would never go. The second, and the more important, is the corporate form. The Company held the far end of the ledger under its own charter, with its own courts, its own troops, its own governor-general and its own accounts. What reached the shareholder was a dividend. Coen's despatches were not secret — they were read in The Hague, and the directors' instructions went back — but nothing in the position of an Amsterdam burgher who owned a share ever required him to look at anything but the figure.

So the diagnostic. **Where an order interposes a chartered body between its metropolitan population and its extractive frontier, expect the variance in the cost column to be at its widest, because the charter supplies both the legal separation and the accounting one; and read the dividend rather than the despatch to find what the metropolitan public was actually being shown.**

The second contribution is smaller and sharper, and it concerns exit. The framework treats exit as a dial the ruler sets. This case shows a third setting the collection has not previously had to record. In Holland the dial ran inward: the Republic was an immigration magnet in a Europe of emigration, and its ordinary subject's compliance was purchased rather than compelled. In Suriname the dial could not be closed at all, and the order eventually stopped trying. **Where a state concludes**

a treaty with those who have exited it, it has conceded the failure of its floor in writing, and the concession is dateable — 1760 with the Ndyuka, 1762 with the Saramaka.

One further observation is entered without being argued, because Module 6 will need it. The domestic hold in this order was cheap, and the reason it was cheap was that the benefit column was full rather than that a belief had been installed. That is a genuinely different foundation from anything else in this collection, and it is a less stable one than it looks, because a benefit reprices and a belief does not. **An order held by benefit rather than by formation is not more secure than one held by belief; it is secure on different terms, and its crises will be denominated in bread and wages rather than in doctrine, will arrive without a programme, and will subside when the price does.**

A note on sources.

One inscription is described rather than quoted. The lines over the Amsterdam Spinhuis portal, attributed to P. C. Hooft — that the passer-by should not fear, since the house does not avenge evil but compels to good, its hand stern and its heart kind — reach me only through an English rendering in the modern art-historical literature. I have not verified the Dutch original, and the phrase used in this module's title is therefore that translation and not a quotation of the carving. No other primary text is quoted in this module.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms. That Dutch real wages were among the highest in Europe in the first half of the seventeenth century and that food riots were rare before its close follows the recent work on urban relief stocks in *Past & Present*; the severity of the crisis of the late 1690s, with Amsterdam rye prices more than doubling, is from the same source. Jan de Vries's work on the bread market supplies the finding that the milled-grain excise, collected through regulated bakers, furnished ten per cent or more of Dutch public revenue into the nineteenth century, and that wheat-bread buyers thereby subsidised the rye eaten by poorer consumers. The estimate that a poor family might spend half its income or more on bread is from the secondary literature and is an estimate.

The Rasphuis figures and description — established 1596 in the former convent of the Poor Clares on the Heiligeweg, granted the brazilwood-rasping monopoly in 1602, inmates from the age of ten, the Spinhuis for women, the De Keyser portal — follow the standard accounts. The Generality Lands are described from the standard constitutional literature: sovereignty claimed on the right of conquest, no provincial estates for Brabant and Flanders, repeated refusals of admission to the States General,

and an extent of roughly a third of the Republic's territory as given in the modern secondary work.

VOC figures: something over 4,700 outward ships and approaching one million men carried to Asia between 1595 and 1795, with roughly a third returning, and roughly forty per cent of sailors and sixty per cent of soldiers of non-Dutch origin, are the figures given in the reference literature deriving from the *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping* project of Bruijn, Gaastra and Schöffer. The account of the *volkhouders*, the *ceel* or *transportbrief*, its sale to *ceelkopers*, the derivation of *zielverkoper* from *ceelverkoper* by way of the pun on *ziel*, and the two months' advance of about twenty guilders, follows the maritime-labour scholarship; the figure of up to 150 guilders charged for lodging and kit comes from a popular account and should be treated as indicative rather than established. The naval crimping system and the shipping embargo used to swell the labour pool are from the *International Review of Social History*.

The Banda figures are contested at every point and are given here as ranges. A pre-conquest population of about fifteen thousand and a total of roughly fourteen thousand dead, enslaved or displaced are the figures the reference literature converges on; one detailed account gives 2,800 killed and 1,700 enslaved in the massacre proper, a contemporary estimate of perhaps 2,500 dead of starvation in the hill forts, 476 taken prisoner by mid-July, and about a thousand survivors deported to Batavia. The execution and display of some forty-odd *orang kaya* by Japanese mercenaries is as reported. These figures do not reconcile neatly with one another and this module does not attempt to reconcile them; the underlying evidentiary base is thin and partisan on both sides, and the honest statement is that the population of the islands was substantially destroyed and replaced.

Atlantic figures: something on the order of half a million Africans carried in Dutch ships to the Dutch American colonies, with an estimate of around 325,000 imported to Suriname between 1650 and the early nineteenth century, are as given in the modern reference literature and are estimates from the transatlantic slave-trade databases. That nearly one in ten of Suriname's enslaved population had fled to maroon communities by the eighteenth century is as reported in the same literature. The peace treaties with the Ndyuka in 1760 and the Saramaka in 1762 are as standardly dated.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where wording or provenance could not be confirmed, the item has been described rather than quoted, and where figures are contested the range is given and the dispute recorded.

MODULE 6

Entered as a Purchase

Extraction — the heaviest indirect taxes in Europe, laid on beer, milled grain, salt and peat, published openly and farmed at public auction, servicing a debt held by the men who voted them; and, at the other end of the same order, a compulsory delivery of cloves and cinnamon at a price the buyer set, which entered the Amsterdam books not as tribute but as the cost of goods sold.

Two ledgers, one set of men

Follow the surplus, and in this order it runs along two channels that never touch on paper and are decided by the same people.

The first is a tax system, and it is the most productive in Europe relative to the size of the population that bears it. The second is a trading account, and its most important entries are not trades at all but compulsory deliveries at administered prices, which is a form of tribute that has been written down as commerce.

This module quantifies both, and then asks the question that connects them, which is not a moral question but a bookkeeping one: what happened to an extraction when it had to pass through a set of accounts that somebody's own money depended on?

The beer, the bread and the peat

Begin with the domestic tax, and with the fact that its base was chosen at the very start of the war and never fundamentally changed.

In 1574 the States of Holland provincialised what had until then been a set of urban excises and called the result the *gemene middelen* — the common means. They were levies at fixed rates, not proportions of value, on beer, wine, milled grain, salt, meat, peat, and the use of the public weighing scales, collected from the seller, who passed them on. The Union of Utrecht five years later wrote the same list into its fifth article as the common revenue of the confederacy. The other principal tax was the *verponding*, a charge on real estate and houses, formalised the same year.

The proportions are the finding. In the 1630s the excises furnished about two-thirds of Holland's revenue; on Wanda Fritschy's figures the *gemene middelen* supplied around seventy-two per cent and the *verponding* around twenty-three, with everything else making up the remainder. Holland's revenue rose from something under a million guilders in the mid-1570s to well over eight million by the middle of the seventeenth century — the exact series differ according to what is being counted, and the reported

figures do not reconcile, but the order of magnitude is a tenfold increase inside two generations.

Now translate it into what a person paid. In the 1630s the excises came to roughly ten guilders a head, against an average per capita income of perhaps a hundred and fifty guilders — an average which, then as now, sat well above what most people actually had. The estimate that matters is the one calculated for the urban day-labourer: an effective burden rising from under five per cent of his income in 1575 to about sixteen per cent by 1630. That is a threefold increase in the space of fifty-five years, and it is a tax on a wage-earner's beer, bread and fuel.

And it stayed high. By 1716 the Republic as a whole was raising 32.5 million guilders a year, and by 1792 some 40.5 million. In 1790 the per capita tax burden in the Republic was comparable to Britain's and about twice that of France, which was at that moment beginning a revolution over the subject.

The framework's question of any tax instrument is what will be accepted in satisfaction of it, because a tax payable only in a currency the household does not hold is a labour draft wearing a tax's clothes. That test returns a null here, and the null is itself informative. These were levies collected from sellers in a fully monetised economy where nearly half the population lived in towns and worked for wages. Nobody had to leave home to earn coin to pay them. What they did instead was raise the price of the four things a poor household could not do without — which is a different mechanism with the same destination, and one that requires no compulsion at all because the compulsion is hunger and cold.

Who voted it, and what they did with it

The Commonwealth of Poland is the natural comparison and it inverts cleanly. There the men who voted the taxes had exempted themselves from them, and the state could not raise an army. Here the men who voted the taxes were the men who consumed the least of what was taxed, in proportion to their means, and the state raised the best-financed military establishment in Europe.

But the more important fact is what was done with the money, because Holland's real invention was not the excise. It was what the excise was pledged to.

Wartime borrowing began as forced loans at high rates — around twelve per cent, reduced to something like six and a quarter by 1611 — and matured into a market in *losrenten*, perpetual redeemable annuities, and *lijfrenten*, life annuities, secured on the province's tax revenues and freely transferable. Because the security was real and the province had never defaulted, the rate fell and went on falling: by the middle of the seventeenth century Holland was servicing a provincial debt of something like a

hundred and fifty million guilders at three to four per cent, rates no monarchy in Europe could approach. In the 1650s Johan de Witt converted the outstanding debt downward. By the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 the debt stood at close to three hundred million; by 1750 it exceeded four hundred million in perpetual annuities; by 1780 the Republic's public liabilities are put at around five hundred million, with debt service consuming something like half of revenue, and Holland's rentier class is estimated to have drawn up to forty per cent of the province's income from interest payments.

Trace the circuit and the shape of the extraction becomes visible.

A Leiden weaver buys a barrel of beer. The excise on it is collected by a tax farmer who bought the right at public auction. The proceeds go to the province, which has pledged them as security for the annuities. The annuities are held, in large part, by the families who sit in the town councils that send delegates to the States that vote the excise and set its rate.

That circuit is entirely lawful, entirely open, and it is not a conspiracy: it is what happens when the people who lend to a state are the people who govern it and the tax is on consumption. It is also the answer to the question of why this order's fiscal machinery was so extraordinarily effective. A state that borrows from strangers must convince them; a state that borrows from its own legislators does not have to, and its legislators have a direct and continuing interest in seeing the pledged revenue collected punctually. The excise was well administered because the men setting it were the men waiting for the interest.

It should be said plainly that the circuit was not perfectly closed, and where it leaked, it leaked in the expected direction. When the province had to squeeze, it squeezed the annuity holders too: an interest cut was imposed by way of a withholding tax on interest payments, a half per cent wealth levy was laid in 1680, and the withholding was doubled to two per cent from 1690, so that investors took an annual haircut. They bore it, and the reason they bore it is on the record: there was nowhere better to put the money. Real estate carried a similar burden and foreign securities were not yet an alternative.

And there were exemptions of the more ordinary kind. Part of what came out during the disturbances of 1748 was that members of the *vroedschap* held exemptions from taxes that had just been raised on everyone else — a small fact by the standards of the period, and one which arrived in public at exactly the wrong moment.

No disguise whatever

The framework holds that the disguise in an extraction measures its audience: an obligation stated plainly on the face of a statute is evidence of an absent external conscience rather than of a mild regime.

The domestic Dutch extraction is the strongest confirming case this collection has. There was no disguise at all. The rates were published in ordinances. The right to collect was auctioned in public to the highest bidder, who kept the surplus over his rent — a system whose entire logic was that a private collector, working for his own profit, would collect more scrupulously than an official. Nothing about it was hidden, softened, or dressed in a language of consent, because there was nobody it needed to be dressed for. The men paying had no forum in which to object: no vote in the town, no vote in the province, no representation in the Generality. And there was no external conscience either — no foreign power to whom the Republic had to justify what it charged its own poor for their bread.

The consequence shows in the record of resistance, and it is a striking figure. Across the whole life of the Republic, from 1600 to 1795, the scholarship counts about twenty-four tax riots. In a hundred and ninety-five years, in the most heavily taxed population in Europe, that is a very small number, and the reason belongs with the previous module's finding: the benefit column was full, and a man doing the arithmetic came out in favour of paying. And when the largest of those disturbances did arrive, in 1748, its object was not the rate but the collector.

Tribute entered as trade

Now the other ledger, and the mechanism this module exists to name.

The Company's Asian revenue had three components. There was genuine trade, and a great deal of it. There were *contingenten* — a tax payable in kind in territories under direct Company rule. And there were *leveranties*, forced deliveries: produce that cultivators were compelled to grow and to sell to the Company at a price the Company fixed. The British scholar J. S. Furnivall described the first of these as tribute undisguised and the second as tribute disguised as trade, and the distinction is exact.

Consider what each looked like from the ground.

On Ambon and the Lease Islands, cloves were to be surrendered to the Company exclusively and at fixed prices, and selling to anyone else was punished severely. The Company did not replace the existing arrangement of village landholding; it captured it, transforming the *dati* — kin-based landholding groups — into territorial units bound to deliver predetermined quantities. Each *dati* was expected to supply one man

annually for the *hongi* expeditions, the armed patrols in war canoes that moved from village to village enforcing the monopoly, punishing smugglers, compelling deliveries and uprooting clove trees growing where the Company had forbidden them. The rowers were mobilised as corvée; when a *hongi* was cancelled, other compulsory labour was substituted, which is the clearest possible evidence of what it was. The last *hongi* sailed in 1821. The clove monopoly outlived the Company itself by decades, and the Dutch stopped buying cloves at a guaranteed fixed price only in 1868, when the trade had ceased to be profitable.

On Banda, as the previous module set out, the population was destroyed and the ground re-let: the land belonged to the Company and was leased to European planters who worked it with enslaved people.

On Ceylon the instrument was caste. The peeling of cinnamon was the hereditary obligation of the Salagama, an obligation that predated the Europeans and which the Dutch inherited, intensified and enforced with a rigour the Portuguese had not reached. Quotas were set and rose; the punishments recorded include the cutting off of ears, confinement in chains, whipping and branding; anyone who could stand and walk with a stick was made to peel. When Salagama families tried to escape the obligation by marrying into lower castes, the Company legislated that marriage into a lower caste did not release a man from his hereditary duty as a peeler. The Salagama rose in 1736, when a thousand of them attacked the Company's barn, refinery and warehouses, and again in a war lasting from 1760 to 1766, after which the Company was obliged to revise the system.

On Java, coffee was introduced in the first decade of the eighteenth century and grown under compulsory delivery. Harvests reached nearly six million pounds by the mid-1730s and peaked at nearly eleven million pounds in the 1790s.

What the price did

Now the mechanism, and it is the module's contribution.

A tax has to be called a tax. It appears in a schedule, it has a rate, and anyone can read the rate and know what is being taken. That is why the framework's medium-of-payment test works: you look at the schedule and ask what will be accepted in satisfaction, and the answer tells you what the instrument is really for.

A compulsory delivery at an administered price is not a tax and does not appear in any schedule. It appears in a set of accounts as a purchase. The Company's books record that so many piculs of cloves were bought at such a price, and the entry is true: the cloves were delivered, the price was paid, the transaction was recorded correctly by a competent bookkeeper. Nothing in the ledger is false.

But the price was set by the buyer, who also held the monopoly of purchase, prohibited sale to anyone else, and maintained an annual armed patrol to enforce both. **The whole of the extraction lives in the gap between the administered price and what the goods would have fetched in a market the grower could reach — and that gap does not appear anywhere in the accounts, because it is not a line item. It is the difference between two numbers, only one of which was ever written down.**

So the statement, and it is offered as a general one: **where an extractive order holds its frontier through a chartered trading body, the extraction is booked as commerce and the conversion is performed by the price. The rate is not in a tax schedule; it is the spread between the administered price and the market price, and that spread is invisible in principle to anyone reading the accounts, because the accounts are honest.**

The diagnostic follows directly. **In any order that extracts through a trading company, do not look for the tax. Look for who sets the price at which the compulsory delivery is credited, and whether the producer has any lawful alternative buyer.** Where the answer is that the buyer sets the price and there is no alternative buyer, the transaction is a levy however it is entered, and its rate can be estimated only from outside the books.

There is a further consequence, and it explains the shape of the whole Dutch record. The metropolitan public was not deceived about Asia. Coen's despatches were read; the Company's dealings were discussed; the Banda affair was known. What the metropolitan public could not do — even a sceptical, literate, well-informed member of it holding a share — was find the extraction in the numbers, because the numbers said *purchase*, and purchase is what the framework calls furniture: a category you walk past rather than a proposition you evaluate.

The disguise, and what it actually tracks

That sets up a refinement of the framework's own proposition, because this order ran both settings at once.

Domestically the extraction was completely undisguised: printed rates, public auctions, a levy on the poor man's beer collected by a man who made his living from the surplus. Overseas the extraction was completely disguised: entered as trade, at a price, in a set of double-entry books. Same decade, same order, in several cases the same men — the burgomaster who set the beer excise sat in the chamber that received the pepper.

So the disguise was not tracking the presence of a conscience. It was tracking the presence of an **accounting relationship**.

The Leiden weaver was owed no account of anything and got none, and the extraction from him was accordingly conducted in the open. The Amsterdam shareholder *was* owed an account — it was his money, the Company was obliged to report to him, and the report had to balance. And precisely because a set of books had to be laid before people whose capital was in it, whatever was taken had to be entered in a recognised category. Tribute is not a category in a merchant's ledger. Purchases are.

Where an extraction must pass through accounts read by the people whose money it is, it will be disguised — and the disguise will take the form of an accounting category rather than a euphemism. That is a sharper statement than the original proposition, and it is testable elsewhere: look at any chartered extractive body and ask what line the tribute is entered on.

One further observation is recorded without being argued, because it is a different mechanism again. The *hongi* expeditions did not extract anything from anybody. They cut down clove trees. A monopoly maintained by destroying production elsewhere is not a levy on the producer at all; it is a levy on every consumer of the good in the world, collected as a price, and enforced by compelling the producing population to do the destroying with its own hands and its own boats. The Ambonese rowers were the labour force of a price-fixing operation conducted against Europe. That belongs in the accounting of what this order took, and it does not fit the framework's existing categories of flow and stock.

The fishwife and her husband

The domestic extraction produced one serious disturbance in two centuries, and its shape confirms everything above.

The war of the Austrian Succession had emptied the treasuries and the provinces had raised the excises. In the spring of 1748 riots began in Friesland and Groningen and moved south; Frisian skippers carried the news to Amsterdam, where on 17 June a crowd on the Botermarkt forced the collectors of the butter tax to shut up shop early, and on 24 June the disturbance broke out in full. The houses of tax farmers and grandees were plundered — nineteen by one count, thirty-six by another. At Leeuwarden the rioters put forward seventy-two points of reform.

What they were attacking was the *pacht*: the auctioned right to collect. And they got what they were attacking. In the aftermath the Republic largely abolished tax farming and moved to collection by appointed and supervised officials — the *collecte*. The rates were not reduced. The collector was changed.

Three people were hanged in Amsterdam on 28 June. One of them was Marretje Arents, a fishwife with four children, whose husband was at that moment serving as a

soldier in the East Indies. The contemporary chronicler Abraham Chaim Braatbard records her telling an agent that today they were the masters and tomorrow they would come to the town hall and see what was to be done with the gentlemen land-thieves; the words reach me only in a modern English rendering and are reported here as the chronicler's account rather than as her verified speech. As the second of the condemned was being hanged the crowd in the square panicked and stampeded, and the chronicler guessed that perhaps two hundred people were crushed or driven into the Amstel.

Hold the household. A woman is hanged in Amsterdam for rioting against the excise on butter. Her husband is in Asia in the service of the Company, which is at that moment buying cloves on Ambon at a price it sets from people who may sell to nobody else, and pepper in Ceylon from a caste legally forbidden to escape the work by marriage.

Both ledgers ran through that one house, and neither of them appeared in the other's books.

Reading extraction against the framework

The framework asks, of any extraction, which fork it is on — a flow tuned to a rate that keeps the producer alive, or a stock taken whole — and where the rate sits relative to the revolt threshold, and what holds it there.

Domestically this is a flow order and a well-tuned one, and the tuning is visible in the record: rates raised after 1678, a wealth levy in 1680, the withholding on interest doubled in 1690, and, when the disturbance finally came in 1748, a change in the method of collection rather than in the rate. It sat at sixteen per cent of a labourer's income by 1630 and produced twenty-four riots in a hundred and ninety-five years, which means it was very close to correctly set. The dials that held it there were not terror and not the closing of exits: they were the two things established in the previous module — a benefit column full enough that paying was rational, and an inward-running exit dial that brought people toward the country rather than out of it.

Overseas it is all three things at once — a flow at Ambon and Ceylon, a stock at Banda, and at the level of the world market a rent maintained by destruction — and the module's contribution concerns how all three were recorded.

The extraction of this order at its frontier was performed by the price and recorded as a purchase, and the price was set by the only lawful buyer, who also policed the prohibition on selling to anyone else. The tax has no schedule, no rate and no name. It is the spread, and the spread is the one number nobody wrote down.

From which the general statement: **where an order extracts through a chartered trading body, look for the extraction in the pricing rather than the taxation, and expect it to be invisible in the accounts by construction, not by concealment.**

And the refinement it forces on the older proposition about disguise: **disguise does not track the presence of an external conscience so much as the presence of an accounting relationship. Where those from whom an order takes are owed no account, it will take openly; where those who finance the taking must be shown a balance, the taking will be entered under whatever heading that balance recognises.** The Dutch order did both, simultaneously, and the difference between the two halves is not a difference of morals or of distance but of who was owed a set of books.

A note on sources.

No primary text is quoted exactly in this module, and one reported utterance is flagged. The words attributed to Marretje Arents on 24 June 1748 come from the chronicle of Abraham Chaim Braatbard as rendered into English on a modern popular history site; I have not seen the chronicle or verified the original wording, and the passage is therefore described as the chronicler's report rather than quoted. J. S. Furnivall's characterisation of forced deliveries as tribute disguised as trade and of contingencies as tribute undisguised is a modern scholar's formulation, reported here in four words as it is transmitted in the reference literature and credited to him.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms, and the figures are estimates from series that do not always agree. That the *gemene middelen* supplied about two-thirds of Holland's revenue in the 1630s and amounted to some ten guilders per capita against an average income of about a hundred and fifty is from De Vries and Van der Woude as summarised in the reference literature; the alternative apportionment of roughly seventy-two per cent excise to twenty-three per cent *verponding* is Wanda Fritschy's. The growth of Holland's revenue is reported differently by different sources — one series gives 760,000 florins in 1574 rising to over fourteen million by 1630, another 540,000 in 1575 rising to over 8.4 million by 1648 — and since these are plainly not the same series, this module gives only the order of magnitude and records the discrepancy rather than choosing between them. The estimate that the urban day-labourer's effective burden rose from under five per cent of income in 1575 to about sixteen per cent by 1630 is from the same body of work and is an estimate. Republic-wide revenue of 32.5 million guilders in 1716 and 40.5 million in 1792, and the comparison of the 1790 per capita burden with Britain's and France's, are from De Vries and Van der Woude.

Debt figures: forced loans at around twelve per cent reduced to about six and a quarter by 1611; a provincial debt of roughly 150 million guilders by the mid-seventeenth century serviced at three to four per cent; close to 300 million at the Peace of Utrecht in 1713; over 400 million by 1750; around 500 million by 1780 with interest consuming something like half of revenue; and Holland's rentiers drawing up to forty per cent of provincial income from interest. These come from the modern financial-history literature, including Gelderblom and Jonker's work on Holland's public finance, and they are estimates whose bases differ. The wealth levy of 1680, the withholding tax on interest and its doubling to two per cent from 1690, and the observation that investors bore it because the alternatives were no better, are from the same work.

The count of about twenty-four tax riots between 1600 and 1795, and the finding that protest was directed at collection methods rather than levels, are from the recent work on tax morale in the Republic. The narrative of the *Pachtersoproer* — its beginning in Friesland and Groningen in the spring of 1748, the Botermarkt on 17 June, the outbreak of 24 June, nineteen or thirty-six houses plundered, the seventy-two points at Leeuwarden, the subsequent abolition of tax farming in favour of the *collecte*, and the executions of 28 June with a fatal crush in the square — follows the standard accounts, which differ on the number of houses. The detail that members of the *vroedschap* held tax exemptions which came to light in 1748 is from the Dutch popular historical literature and I have not traced it to a primary source.

For the Asian extraction: the distinction between *contingenten* and *leveranties* is as set out in the standard reference literature. The Ambon arrangements — exclusive surrender of cloves at fixed prices, severe punishment of sale to third parties, the transformation of *dati* into delivery units, one man per *dati* for the annual *hongi*, corvée mobilisation of rowers with substitute labour duties when a *hongi* was cancelled, the last expedition in 1821, and the abandonment of the fixed-price purchase only in 1868 — follow recent scholarship in the *International Review of Social History* and in the Brill and Taylor & Francis literature on coerced labour in Indonesia, drawing on Knaap and Van Fraassen. The Ceylon material — the hereditary Salagama obligation, rising quotas, the recorded punishments, the rule that marriage into a lower caste did not release the obligation, the attack by a thousand peelers in 1736 and the war of 1760 to 1766 — comes partly from specialist scholarship and partly from a popular Sri Lankan history site, and the more lurid particulars of punishment rest on the latter and should be treated as less well founded than the structural account. The Java coffee figures — nearly six million pounds by the mid-1730s and nearly eleven million by the 1790s — are from the *International Review of Social History* article.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where figures conflict the conflict is recorded rather than resolved, and where wording could not be verified the passage has been described rather than quoted.

MODULE 7

From Italy, Germany, and Elsewhere

Information and suppression — a state with no pre-publication licensing anywhere in its territory, which printed the books every other country burned, and which nonetheless banned two hundred and sixty-three titles, imprisoned a man for writing in Dutch what his friends were permitted to write in Latin, ran a press that reported foreign wars and not its own magistrates, and kept one set of books closed for a hundred and ninety-seven years without a single serious breach.

The reputation, and the question it obscures

Every account of this order arrives at the same place. Descartes published the *Discours de la méthode* anonymously at Leiden in 1637. Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* appeared at Amsterdam in 1670. Galileo's *Discorsi* came out at Leiden in 1638 after Italy had closed to him. Hobbes, Bayle, Locke and later Rousseau and Voltaire were printed or reprinted in the Republic; the Huguenot presses that followed the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 turned Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague into the manufacturing centre of the European Enlightenment. The Dutch invented the newspaper. By the eighteenth century a substantial share of everything printed in French was printed in a country where French was nobody's first language.

All of that is true, and the framework's business is not to admire it but to ask the questions it asks everywhere: what could be said, what could not, who decided, and — the question that actually discriminates between orders — where did information *not* flow, and who benefited from its not flowing.

Asked that way the case turns out to have a very specific shape, and the shape is not "freedom with exceptions." It is a system with three quite different regimes running at once: an almost open regime for ideas addressed to the learned, a much harder regime for the same ideas addressed to the vernacular reader, and a regime of total closure around one particular set of accounts.

No licence, and no centre

The mechanism first, because it explains most of the outcome without any appeal to principle.

The Dutch Republic had no preventive censorship. There was no body anywhere in its territory to which a publisher had to submit a manuscript before printing it, and therefore no licence to be refused. This is the single most important institutional fact in the module, and it distinguishes the Republic from France, from the Empire, and from England under the Licensing Acts. A Dutch printer set type and printed; whatever happened next happened afterwards.

What could happen afterwards was real. On the basis of proclamations issued by the States General, the States of Holland, the Court of Holland and the deputy councillors of the States of Holland, the historian Ingrid Weekhout has counted two hundred and sixty-three publications forbidden in the Republic between 1583 and 1700. Offenders were usually fined, sometimes banished, occasionally tortured or corporally punished; stocks were seized and burned publicly. The range of what was banned is wide and includes Grotius, Spinoza, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Voltaire and Hume, along with comedies, songs, engravings, almanacs, French-language newspapers and — a category worth noticing — publications of sensitive political documents.

But the authority to ban was scattered across every level of a state that had never possessed a centre. A book prohibited in Utrecht was not thereby prohibited in Holland. A printer banished from one province crossed a line on a map and set up in the next. The consistories could and did petition — the Utrecht church council reported Spinoza's *Tractatus* to its burgomasters on 8 April 1670, and other towns followed — but a consistory has no bailiffs, and what it obtained was whatever the local magistrate chose to give it.

So the Republic's famous liberty of the press was not, in its origin, a doctrine. It was the same jurisdictional fragmentation that had produced two calendars and a veto in the Generality, operating in a different register. There is no censorship where there is no jurisdiction large enough to perform it.

What the magistrate was weighing

Position logic supplies the rest, and it is worth setting out the calculation a burgomaster was actually performing when a consistory came to him with a book.

Printing was one of the Republic's major export industries. Amsterdam, Leiden, Rotterdam and The Hague printed for the whole of Europe in Latin, French, English, German, Hebrew, Yiddish, Armenian and Russian, and the trade employed compositors, pressmen, papermakers, binders, engravers, booksellers and shippers, all of whom paid excise and rent. The town that suppressed a title did not prevent its printing; it exported the printing to a competitor twenty miles away, along with the employment and the revenue.

Against that stood a delegation of ministers with a theological objection and no vote in his council.

The magistrate did not have to be tolerant to reach the answer he reached. He had to be able to count. And where the calculation came out the other way — where a book insulted a foreign ruler with whom the Republic was negotiating, or attacked the magistrates themselves, or threatened to set the populace in motion — the same magistrate acted immediately and hard. What looks from outside like a principle of liberty was, at the point of decision, a comparison between the yield of a trade and the nuisance of a complaint.

Publishers understood the system exactly and worked it. Spinoza issued the *Tractatus* anonymously, in Latin, under the imprint of a fictitious Hamburg publisher. And in a detail that shows how commercial the whole arrangement was, one publisher who began printing a heterodox work went unpunished for it because he was the man who reported the author.

The line was drawn around the reader

Now the finding, and it is the module's centre.

Adriaan Koerbagh published *Een Bloemhof van allerley lieflijkheyd* in 1668. It denied divine revelation, attacked the Reformed Church and rejected the Trinity. He published it in Dutch, and he put his own name on it. The Amsterdam consistory got it banned and the copies seized; Koerbagh went into hiding, was tracked down, and was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment under the anti-Socinian placard the States of Holland had issued in 1653. He lasted a few months and died in gaol in 1669.

Lodewijk Meyer, of the same circle, had published *Philosophia S. Scripturae Interpres* in 1666 — anonymously, in Latin — and was not punished. Spinoza published the *Tractatus* in 1670 — anonymously, in Latin, under a false imprint — and although the provincial high court of Holland, Zeeland and West Friesland formally prohibited it in 1674, and although Jonathan Israel has shown that the ban really did suppress its circulation, Spinoza himself was never prosecuted. What was suppressed far more effectively than the Latin text was the *Dutch* one: twenty-three years passed between the Latin edition of 1670 and the first printed Dutch translation, with two attempts interrupted along the way.

Set those three cases side by side and the line the Dutch authorities were actually drawing becomes visible, and it is not a line around content. Meyer, Koerbagh and Spinoza held recognisably the same positions. One was ignored, one was banned but unprosecuted, and one died in prison. What separated them was not what they said but **whom they said it to**, and the instrument that fixed the audience was language.

Latin addressed men who had been through the universities: ministers, lawyers, regents, physicians, scholars — men who already possessed the trust apparatus of the order, who had been formed inside it, and who could be relied upon to argue with a heresy rather than act on it. Dutch addressed the *poorter*, the shopkeeper, the schoolmaster, the artisan and, through him, the household. And the household is where formation happens.

So the censorship of the freest state in Europe was, in its operative form, **a censorship of translation**. It did not much care what was thought at the top of the society. It cared a great deal about what reached the bottom in a language the bottom could read.

That is a general statement worth carrying, and it is testable: **where an order cannot prevent publication, it will police audience instead, and its most reliable instrument for doing so is language — so a censorship regime should be measured not by what it bans but by which language it bans it in.**

It also explains something that has puzzled readers of the Dutch case for three centuries: how a state could be simultaneously the printing house of European free thought and the place where a man died in gaol for freethinking. Both statements describe the same policy. Print for Europe; do not translate for the Dutch.

What the newspapers did not print

The Republic invented the newspaper, and the first one names the finding in its own title.

In the week of 14 to 18 June 1618, at Amsterdam, Caspar van Hilten published a single folio sheet, printed on one side, with no date, no serial number and no imprint. It was called *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* — a coranto from Italy, Germany, and elsewhere.

Not from Holland.

The corantos that followed over the next eighty years — and Brill's bibliography of the seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish papers runs to scores of titles — carried news of the Thirty Years' War, of the Levant, of the English civil wars, of France, of the Baltic, of Rome. Domestic news was present and it was thin. A Dutch reader in 1650 could follow a campaign in Bohemia in weekly instalments and would learn very little from his paper about what his own town council had resolved.

The reason is positional and requires no conspiracy. A newspaper was published under the protection of a town magistrate, whose goodwill it needed and who could withdraw it. Foreign news cost nothing to print, offended nobody with jurisdiction over the printer, and sold well to a mercantile readership whose business genuinely

depended on knowing whether the Sound was open and whether Spain had paid its army. Domestic political news meant reporting on the man who held the printer's fate. There was no rule requiring the press to look outward. There was simply nobody in a position to make it profitable to look inward.

Hence the second statement of this module, and it is a small one that travels far: **a press licensed locally will report distantly.** The direction of a free press's attention is set by where its permission comes from, and the earliest newspapers in Europe announce that in their mastheads.

The gap was filled, when it needed filling, by something else. The Republic produced pamphlets on a scale nowhere else approached — the standard catalogue runs to tens of thousands of items — and they arrived in floods at every crisis: 1618, 1650, 1672, 1747, 1781. Pamphlets were anonymous, cheap, occasional and unlicensed, and they were where Dutch domestic politics was actually argued. The regular press handled the world; the irregular press handled the Republic.

The set of books nobody ever saw

And now the concealment that mattered most in this order, which was not of an idea at all.

On 24 January 1609 Isaac Le Maire, a former director of the East India Company, addressed a remonstrance to Johan van Oldenbarnevelt attacking the Company's management: too few ships sent, money borrowed to cover losses, no discoveries made, the charter underused, and — the charge that would recur for two centuries — the directors enriching themselves at the expense of the investors, refusing to hear complaints, and manoeuvring to merge the first ten-year accounting into the second so that shareholders could not withdraw in 1612 as the charter allowed. The letter circulated widely. In 1622 a group of shareholders petitioned the States General for a proper audit.

They did not get one. The Heeren XVII published only the most rudimentary financial information, frequently delayed. **The Company's account books remained closed for the entire hundred and ninety-seven years of its existence.**

Consider what that means beside the rest of this module. The Republic could not keep Spinoza off the shelves for a decade; the *Tractatus* was banned in 1674 and read anyway. It could not suppress an anonymous pamphlet in 1781, as we are about to see, despite a reward and a hunt that lasted a century. But it kept one set of accounts closed, without a serious breach, for the better part of two hundred years — accounts belonging to a body chartered by the States General, in which a large part of the Dutch

propertied class held shares, and whose operations included the clearing of Banda and the compulsory delivery systems of Ambon, Ceylon and Java.

That is not an accident of what was interesting. It is a reading of what the order actually cared about protecting.

And the directors were capable of active suppression when they wanted it. Le Maire, having failed to reform the Company from outside, organised a bear syndicate against its shares. The directors petitioned the authorities, arguing that the falling price was ruinous to widows and orphans dependent on their VOC holdings — a class whose actual numbers were very small, but whose invocation, as the modern account dryly notes, worked on the conscience of the magistrates. On 27 February 1610 an edict was promulgated banning the practice. It is the first securities regulation in the history of the world, and it was obtained by a board of directors to silence a critic.

Set this beside the previous module's finding and the two halves lock together. The extraction at the frontier was entered in the books as a purchase, so that it was invisible in principle to anyone reading the accounts. And the accounts were never opened. The concealment was double, and neither half of it required anybody to lie.

The pamphlet in the covered carriages

The last episode is the one that shows both what the system could not do and what it had failed to build.

The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, begun in December 1780, went catastrophically. On the night of 25 to 26 September 1781, covered carriages moved through the major towns of the Republic distributing an anonymous pamphlet called *Aan het Volk van Nederland* — To the People of the Netherlands. It declared the whole political system, dominated by a hereditary stadholderate, corrupt, and called for its overthrow in favour of a government resting on popular sovereignty. It became the founding document of the Patriot movement.

The response was immediate and it failed. Within a month the pamphlet was banned and a substantial reward offered for the identification of its author. It was illegally reprinted three times and translated into French, English and German. The author, Joan Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol, was never identified by the authorities; his authorship was established beyond doubt only in 1891, a hundred and ten years later.

The placard by which the deputies of the States of Utrecht denounced it survives in the English translation John Adams sent to the *Boston Patriot* in 1810, and it is worth reading for its tone, which is not the tone of a confident state:

> *...notwithstanding the strong and serious advertisements and publications against the composition, sale, and distribution of lampoons, scandalous pamphlets or libels, and defamatory writings, of whatever sort or in whatever form they may be, to the prejudice of the high sovereignty of these provinces, and of those who are placed in any administration or direction of public affairs, already, heretofore and lately promulgated... nevertheless, the spirit of discord, of wickedness, of calumny and of sedition, has burst forth and spread itself in this state so far, that it has not been possible, hitherto, to restrain it...*

That is an official admission, printed by the government that made it, that its instruments of suppression did not work. And it is worth being precise about why they did not. The Republic had no pre-publication licence to withhold, no national police, no monopoly of printing, no control of the roads between provinces, and a magistracy in each town that would have had to act separately. Every one of those absences is the same absence: the order had never built a centre, because the men who ran it had spent two centuries making sure nobody did.

There is one more thing in that pamphlet, and it belongs with the earlier finding about formation. Van der Capellen addressed the Dutch as a single people. On the scholarship's reading it was the first time anyone had. A country that had never possessed a common school, a common church, a common catechism or, until 1701, a common calendar, was addressed as one nation for the first time in 1781 — illegally, anonymously, from a covered carriage, by a man the authorities could not find.

And it worked. Which suggests that the material for a national formation had been accumulating without anyone administering it, and that what had been missing was not the people but the address.

Reading information against the framework

The framework expects an order's information regime to be readable from its position: what an apex conceals tells you what it fears, and the shape of the concealment tells you who it is afraid will find out. This case delivers a clean answer and one general refinement.

The refinement is the module's contribution. **Where an order lacks the jurisdictional capacity to prevent publication, it does not therefore lack a censorship policy; it shifts the policy from content to audience, and its instrument becomes language.** The Dutch Republic printed for Europe and prosecuted for the vernacular. Meyer wrote in Latin and was left alone; Spinoza wrote in Latin under a false imprint and was banned but never tried, while the Dutch

translation of the same book was kept out of print for twenty-three years; Koerbagh wrote in Dutch under his own name and died in a cell. The three men held the same views. The diagnostic that follows: **do not measure a censorship regime by its list of banned titles. Measure it by which language each title was banned in, and by the gap between the date of the learned edition and the date of the vernacular one.** That gap is the regime.

Why language and not something else is answered by the earlier finding about formation. A Latin reader had already been through the order's own institutions and could be trusted to treat a heresy as a proposition. A Dutch reader had been formed in a household, a congregation and a town, and reached the book with the trust apparatus of that formation intact. What the magistrates were protecting was not the state's secrets. It was the population's cast of authorities — and they were protecting it from translation.

Three further observations are entered for later modules.

The first concerns direction. **A press licensed locally will report distantly**, because its permission comes from the only subject it dare not cover. The first newspaper in the Low Countries announced this in its title: from Italy, Germany, and elsewhere. Where a study finds an unusually free press, it should check the datelines before concluding anything about what the population could learn about itself.

The second concerns what was actually kept closed. Across two centuries the Republic's authorities failed to suppress a philosophical treatise, failed to suppress a seditious pamphlet, failed even to identify its author, and succeeded completely in keeping one set of commercial accounts shut. **The most effective suppression in an order is rarely of an idea; it is of an account, and it is achieved not by prohibition but by the absence of any obligation to publish.** No one had to ban the VOC's books. Nobody was ever entitled to see them.

The third is a note about what the two centuries of thin domestic reporting cost. An order in which the regular press reports abroad and the irregular press reports at home has, in effect, no standing mechanism for informing its own population about its own government: only a flood at each crisis, arriving anonymously, after the fact, and pitched to inflame. That is a serviceable arrangement while the benefit column is full. It is a poor one for an order whose hold depends on a benefit that has begun to reprice, and it is worth carrying into the modules on coordination and collapse.

A note on sources.

One primary text is quoted, and its transmission is stated because it matters. The placard of the deputies of the States of Utrecht against *Aan het Volk van Nederland* is

quoted in the English translation that John Adams supplied in his 1810 letter to the *Boston Patriot*, published among his papers and in the public domain. I have not seen the Dutch original and cannot vouch for the fidelity of the rendering; it is quoted here as Adams's translation, by a man who was resident in the Republic at the time and had every reason to translate it accurately, and not as the placard's own words.

No other primary document is quoted. The title of the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* is given as the bibliographical record gives it, along with the details of the first issue: a single folio sheet, printed on the recto only, without imprint, date or serial number, published at Amsterdam probably between 14 and 18 June 1618, the only surviving copy of the first issue being in Stockholm; the attribution to Caspar van Hilten as publisher and Joris Veseler as printer is the standard inference from later papers and is not certain. Le Maire's remonstrance of 24 January 1609 to Oldenbarnevelt is described from the modern corporate-governance scholarship that quotes it, not quoted here.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms. The figure of 263 titles forbidden between 1583 and 1700, and the account of the issuing authorities and the penalties, is Ingrid Weekhout's, as reported in the literature on Dutch censorship and press freedom. The absence of preventive censorship, and the observation that a book banned in one province could be printed in the next and a banished printer simply re-establish himself, follow Pettegree and Der Weduwen. The Utrecht consistory's report of 8 April 1670 and the subsequent reactions in Leiden, Haarlem, Amsterdam, The Hague and Schieland are from Van Bunge and the associated literature. The Koerbagh case — *Een Bloemhof van allerley lieflijkheyd* published in Dutch under his own name in 1668, the ban and seizure procured by the Amsterdam consistory, the ten-year sentence under the anti-Socinian placard of 1653, and his death in gaol in 1669 — follows the standard accounts, which differ slightly on the length of his imprisonment before death. The 1674 prohibition of the *Tractatus* by the provincial high court, the effectiveness of its suppression on Jonathan Israel's showing, and the twenty-three-year gap before a printed Dutch translation with two interrupted attempts, are from the recent work in *Quaerendo*. The 1656 prohibition of Cartesian teaching by the States of Holland and West Friesland is as standardly dated.

The VOC material rests on the corporate-governance literature: the substance of Le Maire's 1609 complaints, the failed shareholder petition of 1622, the publication by the Heeren XVII of only rudimentary and often delayed financial information, and the persistence of opaque accounts throughout the Company's life. The edict of 27 February 1610 against naked short selling, obtained after the directors argued the harm to widows and orphans, is described from the same body of work, including the

account given by the modern historians of the Amsterdam exchange; the characterisation of the widows-and-orphans argument as disproportionate to the actual number affected is theirs, not mine.

For 1781: the distribution of *Aan het Volk van Nederland* from covered carriages on the night of 25 to 26 September, the ban within a month, the reward offered, the three illegal reprintings and translations into French, English and German, and the establishment of Van der Capellen's authorship only in 1891, follow the standard Dutch accounts. The claim that the pamphlet was the first text to address the Dutch as a single people is the interpretation offered in the recent literature and is reported as such.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where wording or provenance could not be confirmed, the passage has been described rather than quoted, and the chain of transmission stated where a translation stands between me and the original.

MODULE 8

The Same Man in Four Chairs

Elite coordination and the default — how a constitution designed to make decision impossible produced eighty years of war, the largest fleet on earth and two centuries without a default; why men who loathed each other went on holding the arrangement up; and what changed in the 1780s when a body of prosperous men who drew nothing from it began buying their own muskets.

A machine built to do nothing

Set out the formal structure and the first thing to say about it is that it should not have worked for a decade.

At the top, the States General could not resolve on truce, peace, war, or any general tax without the common consent of every province. Below that, no delegate sitting in it could agree to anything on his own authority: he came with an instruction from his provincial States, and where the instruction did not cover the matter he went home and asked. Below that again, in Holland, the provincial States consisted of the Ridderschap and eighteen voting towns, each of whose delegates was likewise bound by the instruction of a council that met weekly or less. And below that, each of those councils was a body of ten to forty men appointed for life, filling its own vacancies, answerable to nobody at all.

The Generality had no revenue of its own. The uniform excises the Union had specified were never levied; instead the Council of State drew up the *Staat van Oorlog*, the statement of war, which apportioned the cost of every regiment and company among the provinces, each of which then raised its share at home by whatever means it chose, and much of which never went to a central treasury but was spent in the province itself.

So there was no central purse, no central army administration, no head of state, no ministry, no capital city in the sense other states had one, and a rule requiring the agreement of seven parties whose delegates could not agree without going home first.

And this arrangement fought the greatest power in Europe for eighty years, built the largest merchant marine and one of the two largest navies in the world, financed a global commercial empire, borrowed at rates no monarchy could match, and never once repudiated a debt.

Something coordinated it. This module is about what, and about why the men inside it kept holding it up, and about the point at which some people with money and standing stopped.

The desk the letters came to

Start with the office the constitution does not really contain.

The Grand Pensionary of Holland — *raadpensionaris*, and before 1619 the Land's Advocate — was, on paper, a lawyer employed by a provincial assembly. He was a servant of the States of Holland and of no wider body. He had no fellow ministers, led no department, and had no head of state above him. The office existed, as the constitutional literature puts it, because the delegates of the States were all formally equal and therefore none of them could act as a head.

What he actually did is the point.

He prepared the business and drafted the resolutions. He chaired. He represented the Ridderschap in its absence and formulated the single opinion the nobility was entitled to express, which meant that when the nobles were away he held one of the votes he was counting. And he handled the entire correspondence of the States: with the towns, with the other provinces, with the States General, and with foreign powers. Letters addressed to the assembly could be read by any member, so anything confidential was addressed to him personally. Large parts of that correspondence survive, and they are the reason we can reconstruct Dutch policy at all.

There is the mechanism. He held no authority whatever and he held the paper. Everything that arrived, arrived on his desk; everything that went out, went out over his draft; and the confidential portion of it existed nowhere else. Britannica's judgement on Oldenbarnevelt is exactly right and generalises: his power came not from his office but from his being the leader of the ruling oligarchy of Holland.

That yields the module's first general statement. **A body of formal equals will generate an informal centre at whatever point its information converges, and the holder of that point will exercise the authority the constitution denies him.** The Dutch did not design a prime minister. They designed an assembly of equals, and a prime minister condensed at the place where the letters landed.

Two of the men who held that desk were killed by the arrangement they ran. Oldenbarnevelt was beheaded on the Binnenhof on 13 May 1619. Johan de Witt, who had held it since 1653, was torn apart with his brother Cornelis by a crowd at The Hague on 20 August 1672. In both cases the office survived the man without alteration, and a successor was at the desk within weeks — which is the proof that the

centre was structural rather than personal. **Where an informal centre is generated by a structural convergence, killing its occupant does not disperse it.**

The other centre

There was a second one, and the whole political history of the Republic is the oscillation between them.

The Stadholder was, formally, the servant of each province that appointed him — a Habsburg office, retained after the Habsburgs were dismissed, which is itself a fine instance of how thoroughly this order kept the furniture and changed the occupants. In fact he was Captain-General and Admiral-General, commander of the army the provinces paid for, a prince with dynastic marriages and foreign standing that no regent possessed, and — increasingly — the man who chose each town's magistrates from the shortlist the town drew up. After 1748 that selection from a shortlist became a general system across the Republic.

So the arrangement contained two possible centres: one of paper, held by a lawyer with no authority, and one of force, held by a prince with no sovereignty. It never resolved the contradiction and never tried. It simply alternated. Oldenbarnevelt fell to Maurice in 1618–19. The stadholderate was abolished after William II's death in 1650 and the Perpetual Edict of 1667 attempted to bar it permanently; De Witt fell in 1672 and William III took it up. There was a second stadholderless period from 1702, and in 1747 the office was restored, made hereditary and extended to all the provinces at once.

Notice what every one of those transitions was. A change of *occupancy*. The councils were purged and refilled — a *wetsverzetting* — and the machinery went on running: the same excises, the same annuities, the same Company charter, the same quotas, the same co-optation. No property changed hands. This is the settlement of 1572–79 showing through two centuries later, exactly as the module on the settlement predicted: an elite paid in offices experiences its crises as contests over chairs.

The same man in four chairs

Now the default itself, and the best way to see it is through one man who is not famous.

Willem van Schuylenburg was a former burgomaster of The Hague and a councillor at the Court of Holland. He was also treasurer of the domain of William III — that is, an officer of the Stadholder's own household. And in the accounts of Paulus Gebhardt, one of the *solliciteurs-militair* who kept the army's regiments in being, Van

Schuylenburg appears as the principal creditor, lending 207,600 guilders, some forty per cent of the total Gebhardt borrowed.

The *solliciteur* system deserves a sentence because it shows the whole machine in miniature. A regiment was assigned by the *Staat van Oorlog* to a particular province, which issued a pay order to the company captain. The captain's business agent — the *solliciteur* — carried that order, collected from the provincial treasury, and, because the treasury was often slow, borrowed privately against the order to keep the men fed and under arms in the meantime. So the Dutch army was funded, at the margin, by private credit advanced against provincial paper by men who were themselves provincial officeholders.

Van Schuylenburg was therefore, at once: a regent of a Holland town; a judge of the province's high court; an officer of the Stadholder's household; and a creditor of the army. Four chairs. Four separate incomes. And every one of them destroyed by the same event — a change in the form of the government.

That is the default, and it is worth stating precisely what makes it strong, because the strength does not lie where one would first look.

Run the ordinary member of this hierarchy and count what he holds. A seat in the *vroedschap*, held for life, which is his estate in the sense established earlier in this study — it cannot be sold, cannot be inherited in law, and evaporates the day the council is reconstituted. Annuities on the province, secured on excises he helps to vote, at a rate no other investment in Europe could match for safety. Very possibly a chamber seat in the East or West India Company, which brought a salary, a share of the returns and the private trading opportunities that went with it — and which, like every other public position, required membership of the Reformed Church. A share in a tax farm, or a relation who held one. The patronage of the ministers' stipends, disbursed by the provincial spiritual office. The appointment of the governors of the orphanage, the almshouse and the poorhouse, which was social standing convertible into obligation. And, if his town lay on a drainage board, a place there too.

Six or seven distinct streams. Not one of them large enough on its own to explain his politics. All of them cut by the same knife.

This is why the arrangement was defended by default. Not because any single man gained enormously from it — many did not — but because each man's position rested on several separate supports, all of which had the same foundation. A man with one benefit can be compensated: offer him more than the benefit is worth and he will sell. A man with six cannot be made whole by anybody, because no purchaser can replace a seat, an annuity, a chamber, a patronage and a

standing simultaneously. His defence of the arrangement requires no loyalty, no ideology and no coordination with anyone else. It requires only that he not be a fool.

From which the module's central statement: **an arrangement is defended by default in proportion to the number of distinct benefit streams each member draws from it, not in proportion to the size of any of them; and the diagnostic is therefore to count the streams rather than to measure the take.** Where the count is high, expect an elite that quarrels ferociously and coordinates perfectly, and expect the arrangement to survive the violent removal of its most central figure — as this one survived a beheading in 1619 and a lynching in 1672 without a single institution changing shape.

What the veto was actually used on

This also answers the question the formal structure poses, which is how anything at all got decided under a unanimity rule.

The answer is that the veto was almost never exercised on the arrangement. It was exercised constantly on distributional questions *inside* it: the apportionment of quotas, precedence between provinces, the size of the army versus the navy, whether a particular officer's regiment sat on Holland's charge or Friesland's, who got which appointment. Those disputes were bitter, protracted and occasionally paralysing.

But no province ever vetoed the excise system, the annuity system, the Company charters, co-optation, or the exclusion of dissenters from office — because no delegate in any chamber had an interest in doing so. Every man in the room held his position under the same set of instruments. **A veto is only dangerous to an arrangement when somebody in the room would be better off without the arrangement, and in this one, for two centuries, nobody was.**

There was also a safety valve, and it is the second mechanism that made the rule liveable.

Because each province raised its own quota at home, a province that would not agree did not have to be coerced. It simply fell into arrears, and Holland — at roughly fifty-eight per cent of the budget, and often paying more than that in practice because others defaulted — made up the difference. Free-riding was the constitutional escape hatch. It was cheaper to pay Friesland's share than to force Friesland's consent, and Holland paid because fifty-eight per cent of a functioning union was worth incomparably more than a hundred per cent of a broken one.

Which yields a proposition with a warning attached. **A unanimity rule is survivable precisely as long as one member is rich enough to purchase the others'**

consent by covering their default. The rule does not bite while the surplus lasts; it bites the moment the surplus goes. Hold that for the module on collapse.

Where the interlock did not reach

Now the fracture, and the framework's instruction is to look for a group that has standing and means and has stopped drawing from the arrangement. In this case such a group existed from the founding, grew richer for two centuries, and was excluded by a rule that had been written into the settlement itself.

Only members of the public church could hold office in government, command in the military, or serve the Bank of Amsterdam or the East India Company. And something over forty per cent of the Republic's population belonged to other confessions — Catholics above all, but also Mennonites, Lutherans, Remonstrants and Jews.

Sit with the arithmetic of that. A prosperous Mennonite merchant in Amsterdam in 1770 could own ships, employ hundreds, insure cargoes, lend to the province, and buy as many annuities as he liked. He could not sit on the council, could not hold a chamber in the Company, could not command a company of soldiers, and could not place his son in any of those. He drew one stream from the arrangement — the interest on his bonds — where a regent of similar wealth drew six. He was not oppressed in any sense the previous module would recognise; his cost column was excellent. He was simply, structurally, not a member.

And in the eighteenth century a second divergence opened on top of the first, and it is the one that mattered. The regent class had become rentiers: their income came increasingly from annuities, from foreign loans and from safe paper. The merchants, small bankers and manufacturers who depended on the home market and on active trade were suffering as trade declined, while the holders of accumulated capital did comparatively well out of a market in securities. So the *direction* of the elite's income and the direction of the commercial classes' income had come apart. What was good for a creditor — sound money, punctual interest, peace at almost any price, low risk — was no longer what was good for a trader who needed markets, convoys and a navy that could protect them.

That is the fracture in its purest form: not the poor against the rich, and not one faction of the elite against another, but **a body of men with capital and standing who drew nothing from the arrangement and whose interests had begun to point the other way.**

The tell that the elite itself knew the chairs were oversubscribed is the one recorded earlier in this study. From the later seventeenth century the regent families began

putting their arrangements into notarised *contracten van correspondentie*, agreeing among themselves how the offices would rotate, and by the eighteenth century these were everywhere. A class that writes down what used to go without saying has stopped being able to rely on the understanding — and it has also, incidentally, produced a document that anyone outside can point at.

They bought their own guns

The Republic lost the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, begun in December 1780, comprehensively and humiliatingly. What followed is the clearest illustration in this study of both the fracture and the default.

The Patriot movement's first leaders were structurally outside the interlock and it shows in who they were: François Adriaan van der Kemp, a Mennonite pastor at Leiden — excluded by confession — and Joan Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol, a nobleman of Overijssel, excluded by province, since the interlock ran through the Holland towns. Their first successes came not in Amsterdam but in the small interior towns, Deventer among them, through petition campaigns run by purpose-built associations. Some dissident regents joined, as dissident members of an elite always do.

Then, in 1784 and 1785, they did the thing that made it a crisis rather than an agitation. They formed *vrijkorpsen* — free corps — pooling money to buy muskets and uniforms, and holding national assemblies of the corps from 1784, with an Act of Association passed at a corps assembly in June 1785.

Understand what that act was, structurally. The Republic already had an armed citizenry: the *schutterij*, whose maintenance the magistrates of every town had been bound by oath since the twenty-fifth article of the Union of Utrecht in 1579. The *schutterij* was inside the arrangement — its officers were the town's respectable men, its commissions were civic honours in the magistrates' gift, and it had been the instrument that delivered the towns in 1572. The free corps was outside it: privately subscribed, privately armed, self-officered, and, in the plain words of the Dutch popular account, an army over which William had no power.

A group with means and standing which has ceased to benefit from an arrangement announces itself by constituting an armed body outside the one the constitution protects. That is the diagnostic, and it is dated to 1784–85.

The regents' answer at Utrecht in 1784 shows the default working with no conspiracy whatever. Faced with Patriot proposals for an elected council and a standing burghers' committee to hear grievances, the town council conceded the principle — and then required that the scheme be ratified by the States of Utrecht, where it could not pass. Nobody had to agree on a strategy. The ordinary operation of the procedure,

in which every stage was occupied by a man whose position depended on the outcome, produced the outcome. That is what defence by default looks like when it is functioning.

What 1787 revealed

The Patriots took control of several towns and of the province of Holland's militia arrangements; William V withdrew to Nijmegen; and in September 1787 a Prussian army entered the Republic, restored the Stadholder, and drove the Patriot leadership into exile in France.

That is the fact to hold. The arrangement did not defeat its challengers. It was rescued by a foreign army belonging to the Stadholder's wife's brother.

An interlock that must be restored from outside has stopped being self-defending. The default had held for two centuries because every man in the hierarchy, acting on his own account, produced the collective result without consulting anyone. In 1787 that was no longer sufficient, and the reason is traceable to the two divergences already named: a body of wealthy men who drew no streams at all, and an elite whose income had rotated from trade to interest, so that the arrangement had stopped being a common interest and had become one party's interest.

Eight years later the French came instead of the Prussians, and there was no rescue.

Reading the default against the framework

The framework's open problem here is coordination without a coordinator: how a hierarchy of men with no central authority, who frequently detest one another, nonetheless acts as one whenever the arrangement itself is at issue. The Dutch case answers it in three parts, and the first is the contribution.

The strength of a default is a function of how many separate benefits each member draws, not how large any of them is. The Dutch regent held a seat, an annuity, a company chamber, a farm, a patronage and a place on a board — six or seven streams from one source. No individual stream would have bought his loyalty; the combination made his position unpurchaseable, because nothing outside the arrangement could replace all of it at once. He therefore defended the whole by defending himself, and needed neither to like nor to consult his colleagues. **The diagnostic is to count streams, not to weigh takings**, and where the count is high, expect an elite that quarrels violently over distribution, coordinates perfectly against alteration, and survives the killing of its most important men without institutional

change. This one beheaded its chief minister in 1619 and let a crowd tear its next one apart in 1672, and nothing in the machinery moved.

Second, on the coordination problem proper. **A body of formal equals generates an informal centre at the point where its information converges, and the holder of that desk exercises the authority the constitution withholds.** The Grand Pensionary had no power and all the correspondence, which turned out to be the same thing. This also explains a pattern the collection has seen elsewhere without naming: such orders periodically destroy the man at that desk, because he has accumulated an authority the constitution cannot account for and therefore cannot legitimate — and the destruction changes nothing, because the convergence that produced him is structural.

Third, on fracture. The framework directs attention to a group with standing and means that has stopped benefiting. This case adds two refinements to that instruction.

Where a settlement makes a confessional test a condition of officeholding, it manufactures the fracture group at the founding and then waits two centuries for it to become rich. The exclusion written into the Dutch settlement was not a live grievance in 1600, when dissenters were poor and the war was on. By 1780 it described forty per cent of the population, including a great deal of the country's commercial capital. The rule did not change. The people it excluded did.

And: **when the elite's income and the excluded group's income diverge in direction — rentiers against traders — the arrangement has ceased to be a common interest and has become one party's interest, whatever the constitution still says.** A creditor wants peace, punctual interest and low risk. A trader wants markets, convoys and a fleet. Those are not the same policy, and by the 1780s the Republic was governed entirely by men holding the first preference in a country whose remaining commercial energy lay with the second.

The signal that the fracture has become operational is not a pamphlet, a petition or a riot, all of which this order absorbed for two centuries. It is **the constitution of an armed body outside the one the constitution protects.** The Dutch had guaranteed the *schutterij* in the founding treaty of 1579 and thereby made it part of the interlock. In 1784 the excluded bought their own muskets and formed their own companies, and three years later the arrangement had to be restored by a foreign army.

A note on sources.

No primary text is quoted in this module. The provisions of the Union of Utrecht referred to — Article IX on unanimity for truce, peace, war and general imposts, and

Article XXV on the maintenance of the *schutterijen* — were quoted from the treaty text in earlier modules of this study and are here described rather than requoted.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms. The account of the Grand Pensionary's office follows the Dutch constitutional literature and Jaap de Haan's recent study of the three seventeenth-century holders, from which the four functions — administrative, executive, political and representative — are taken; the observations that the office existed because the delegates were formal equals with no head among them, that its holder represented the Ridderschap in its absence and phrased the nobility's single vote, and that he handled the whole correspondence of the States so that confidential letters were addressed to him personally, are from that literature. The judgement that Oldenbarnevelt's power came from his leadership of the Holland oligarchy rather than from his office is Britannica's, and the renaming of the office from *landsadvocaat* to *raadpensionaris* in 1619 follows the same accounts.

The *Staat van Oorlog* and the repartition of regimental costs among the provinces are described from the standard military-administrative literature. The *solliciteur-militair* system, and the specific case of Paulus Gebhardt and his principal creditor Willem van Schuylenburg — 207,600 guilders, some forty per cent of Gebhardt's total borrowing, from a man who was councillor and treasurer of William III's domain, former burgomaster of The Hague and councillor at the Court of Holland, resident at Delft — are from Pepijn Brandon's work as reported in the *Journal of Early Modern History*. That the debts issued at the Amsterdam and The Hague tax offices accounted for up to two-thirds of Holland's total is from the same article.

The composition of the *vroedschap* — ten to forty members, appointed for life, filling their own vacancies, choosing magistrates and the governors of the poorhouse, orphanage and almshouses, and the system of shortlists from which the Stadholder chose, general across the Republic from 1748 — follows the standard reference literature. The exclusion of non-members of the public church from government, military command, the Bank of Amsterdam and the East India Company, and the estimate that over forty per cent of the population belonged to other confessions, are from the modern account of the Patriot movement cited below and should be treated as that author's summary rather than as an audited figure; the confessional proportions in particular are contested and vary sharply by province and by date.

The Patriot material — the leadership of Van der Kemp and Van der Capellen, the early successes in the smaller interior towns rather than in Amsterdam, the divergence between rentier regents prospering in the securities market and home-market merchants and manufacturers suffering, the free corps national assemblies from 1784 and the Act of Association of June 1785, the Utrecht council's manoeuvre of 1784 in

referring reform to the provincial States, and the Prussian intervention of September 1787 — follows the standard accounts, including an older American scholarly article on the movement and the Dutch national historical canon. The characterisation of the free corps as forces over which the Stadholder had no power is the Dutch canon's own.

Dates given from general knowledge and not re-verified in the course of writing this module — the execution of Oldenbarnevelt on 13 May 1619, the killing of the De Witt brothers on 20 August 1672, the Perpetual Edict of 1667, the stadholderless periods of 1650–1672 and 1702–1747, and the hereditary restoration of 1747 — are standard and uncontested, but they are flagged here as reported rather than freshly checked.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory in the sense the project's rule forbids: no quotation, figure or attribution has been invented, and where a figure rests on a single modern summary that fact is stated.

MODULE 9

Not His Competent Judge

Plurality or foreclosure — a country whose founding manifesto listed among its grievances that a king had tried great men before judges who were not their lawful judges, and which thirty-eight years later beheaded its own chief minister after a trial by twenty-four of his personal enemies who allowed him no counsel, no documents and no pen; what actually protected an ordinary Dutchman, which was not a right; and the exact conditions under which that protection worked and the exact conditions under which it vanished.

The question, stated carefully

This module asks whether there was liberty in the Dutch Republic or only the reputation of it, and the question has to be posed precisely or the answer will be sentimental in either direction.

A liberty is not a sentence in a document. Every order in this collection has documents, and several of the most closed have the most eloquent ones. A liberty is a constraint that actually binds the people who hold the floor of force, and it binds them only if some body exists that has both the **standing** to invoke it against them and an **interest** in doing so. Absent that body, the sentence is a description of what the ruler currently finds convenient.

The second question follows from the first: where do such constraints come from? They are almost never the work of the people they eventually protect. A peasant does not extract a procedural right. What happens is that a faction *inside* the hierarchy, bargaining from strength at a moment when neither side wants to break the arrangement, extracts a privilege or a protection — and the extracted thing outlives the quarrel that produced it. Liberties are the sediment of factional fights, and the way to find their origin is to look for the fight.

The Dutch Republic is the hardest case in the collection for this, because its reputation is enormous and because a good deal of the reputation is deserved. What follows tries to separate what was real from what was rhetoric, and — the part that matters more — to identify the mechanism that made the real part real, because that mechanism turns out to be very specific and to have an exact failure condition.

What was genuinely there

Begin by conceding the case at its strongest, because a study that starts by debunking is not doing the arithmetic.

An ordinary man in Holland in 1650 held, in practice and in most cases in law: freedom of his person, with no serfdom anywhere in the country; freedom of movement, with no permission required to leave a town or marry; secure and alienable property, in a land market that had existed for five hundred years; access to a functioning civil court in disputes with other subjects; no seigneurial jurisdiction over him of any kind; a poor-relief apparatus better than any in Europe; guild membership if he had the burgher right, and the burgher right for a few weeks' wages; and a written guarantee, in the founding treaty of the Union, that he should remain free in his religion and that nobody should pursue or examine him on account of it.

That is a longer list than a Frenchman, a Pole, a Spaniard, a Neapolitan or a Prussian could have produced, and it is not a formality. Men voted for it with their feet: the Republic was the destination of Europe's migration for two centuries, and a great many of them came precisely because of the items on that list.

But look at the shape of the list rather than its length. Every item on it is a **private** liberty. Belief, movement, property, trade, marriage, contract, relief. Not one of them is a political liberty, and the political column is close to empty. He had no vote at any level of the state. He had no right of petition that carried any obligation on anybody to answer. He had no protection whatever against the magistrate, because — as we shall see — the magistrate was also his judge. And if he was not a member of the public church, which described something over forty per cent of the population, he was barred from office in the government, from command in the army, from the Bank of Amsterdam and from the East India Company.

An order can be extraordinarily free in the private column and entirely closed in the political one. This one was, for two centuries, and the two facts have to be held together or nothing about the case is intelligible.

Where the founding guarantee came from

Take the most famous of the guarantees and ask the framework's question: which factional problem produced it, and what did it cost the party that conceded it?

The thirteenth article of the Union of Utrecht provides that Holland and Zeeland shall order religion as they think fit, that the other provinces may follow the religious peace already drafted or make such order as suits them, and that in any case *every*

individual shall be free to remain in his religion, and no one shall be pursued or examined on account of religion.

It did not come from a theory of conscience. It came from an assembly problem. The parties being federated in January 1579 had incompatible religious settlements: Holland and Zeeland already Calvinist and unwilling to be told otherwise; Utrecht and Gelderland mixed and contested; and the towns that acceded over the following eighteen months — Ghent, Antwerp, Ypres, Bruges, Breda — sitting on Catholic populations. There was no confessional formula that all of them would sign. So the treaty conceded the one thing that could be conceded to everybody, and reserved to each province the thing that could not.

Now price the concession. What was granted was freedom of inward belief and freedom from interrogation about it — a thing that cannot be policed at acceptable cost by any early modern state, and which the conceding party was therefore giving away at something close to nothing. What was withheld was public worship, which is the institutional form, and access to office, which is the material one. Catholics kept their consciences and lost their churches; and for two hundred years they bought back the use of a room behind a house front by paying a sheriff.

That is not a cynical reading, and the clause was not worthless — a man who cannot be interrogated about his belief is in a materially different position from one who can, as the thirteen hundred people executed for heresy in these provinces between 1523 and 1566 would have testified. It is a structural reading. **The founding liberty of the Dutch Republic was a coalition term, and its generosity is measured by what it declined to concede.**

Not his competent judge

Now the test case, and it is as clean a one as this collection has found.

Among the grievances the States General published in July 1581 to justify deposing Philip II was this: that the King had arrested the great lords under colour of wanting their counsel, had them brought out of Brabant contrary to the privileges, and set over them a judge who was not their competent judge — *voor hem als niet wesende heurlieder competente Rechter gestelt* — and then had them publicly and shamefully executed. The reference is to Egmont and Hoorn, beheaded in the Grand Place in June 1568. The right being asserted is the oldest procedural liberty in the Low Countries, present in the Brabant charter of 1356 and in the Great Privilege of 1477: a man is to be tried in his own province, under its law, by the judge who has jurisdiction over him.

Thirty-eight years later the founders did it themselves.

On 28 August 1618 the States General conferred extraordinary powers on Prince Maurice. On the 29th, Oldenbarnevelt was arrested, along with Hugo Grotius, pensionary of Rotterdam, Rombout Hogerbeets, pensionary of Leiden, and Gilles van Ledenberg, secretary of the States of Utrecht. In February 1619 he was arraigned before a special commission of twenty-four judges delegated by the States General. Only half were Hollanders. Nearly all were his political and, in a number of cases, personal enemies. Several were not qualified lawyers. He was held for more than half a year under interrogation and was given no writing materials, no access to books, documents or witnesses, and no counsel. He conducted his own defence.

That defence was, as Britannica puts it, unassailable at least in theory: he had acted throughout as a servant of the sovereign province of Holland and was therefore answerable to the judiciary of Holland alone — the Court of Holland or the High Council of Holland and Zeeland — and the States General had no residual sovereignty over him. The protest was disregarded. It had to be, because there was no federal judiciary in existence; the States General, claiming to be the highest court in the land, delegated the matter to a commission, which is what it did in such cases generally, including the later proceeding over the Amboyna affair.

He was condemned on 12 May 1619, not for treason but for the subversion of religion and policy, and beheaded the following day at the Binnenhof, aged seventy-one. Grotius and Hogerbeets received life. Grotius escaped from Loevestein in a book chest in 1621.

The framework's reading of this is not that the Dutch were hypocrites. It is structural, and it generalises.

A liberty asserted as a grievance against a former ruler is not a liberty. It is a complaint. It becomes a liberty only when some body acquires both the standing and the interest to enforce it against whoever currently holds the floor — and a deposition creates no such body, because the men who make it become the ruler. The 1581 manifesto did not establish a court. It changed who occupied the position the complaint had been about. The privilege of the competent judge survived on paper in every provincial charter and had, at the federal level, precisely no institution behind it, which is why the very first time the Generality needed to destroy a man it discovered that it was itself the highest court and could delegate the matter to whomever it liked.

The diagnostic that follows is usable anywhere: **after any deposition, ask what body was created with standing to enforce, against the new ruler, the offences charged against the old one. Where the answer is none, the grievances were rhetoric — however sincerely they were felt.**

Your judge was your councillor

The 1619 case is spectacular but it is not an anomaly, and the ordinary version of it ran in every town in the Republic for two centuries.

A Dutch town was judged by its bench of *schepenen*. The *schepenen* were the town's magistrates, chosen annually from a shortlist the council drew up, from among the same few dozen families who sat on the council. There was no separation of function, no judicial review, and no appeal to any body outside the province. The men who set the excise, granted the offices, licensed the printers, appointed the ministers and ran the orphanage were the men who tried you.

Which means the private liberties listed earlier had a hard edge. They were excellent as between subjects: two merchants in a contract dispute went before a competent, quick, commercially literate court, and that is a large part of why the Dutch commercial system worked. They were nothing at all as between a subject and the magistracy, because there was nowhere to take the case.

So what actually protected people?

Competition, and its exact signature

The answer is not a right. It is that the Republic contained a very large number of jurisdictions, none of which could reach into another, and several of which had a commercial interest in taking in whatever the neighbour had thrown out.

A printer banished from one province re-established himself in the next; a book prohibited in Utrecht was printed in Amsterdam; a man in trouble with his magistrate moved his household twenty miles; a merchant who disliked a levy moved his warehouse; a congregation forbidden in one town met in another. The whole of what the eighteenth century admired as Dutch liberty rests on this, and it was not designed. It was the residual of an order whose founding treaty had guaranteed every town and province its own privileges precisely so that no centre could form.

But this mechanism has a signature, and once stated it predicts the Dutch record with something close to precision.

Jurisdictional competition produces liberty only on questions where the jurisdictions actually compete. On questions where they concur, it produces the most complete foreclosure available anywhere, because there is nowhere left to go.

Run the case against it.

Printing. Every town wanted the trade, its employment and its excise. The jurisdictions competed. Result: no book could be suppressed in the Republic, and the country printed the forbidden literature of the whole continent for two hundred years.

Heterodoxy in the vernacular. Every magistracy shared an interest in what reached the Dutch household, and the consistories pressed all of them in the same direction. The jurisdictions concurred. Result: Koerbagh, who published in Dutch under his own name in 1668, was sentenced to ten years and died in gaol in 1669, while Meyer and Spinoza, publishing the same ideas in Latin, went untouched.

Office for dissenters. Every magistracy in the Republic was composed of members of the public church, and the exclusion protected every one of them. Total concurrence. Result: the bar held without a single significant breach for two centuries, over a population of which something above forty per cent was excluded, and no town anywhere offered a refuge, because offering one would have meant admitting outsiders to its own council.

Public Catholic worship. Concurrence again, and the result again total: illegal in all seven provinces for the whole life of the Republic, while being locally tolerated for money — which is not a liberty but a purchase, renewed annually, revocable at will.

That is the answer to what makes a liberty more than words in an order of this kind, and it is not a comfortable one. What made the Dutch free was not a charter and not a court. It was the existence, twenty miles away, of a rival jurisdiction with a reason to want you. And the corollary is the part worth carrying: **every liberty produced this way evaporates the moment the jurisdictions consolidate or come to agree, and it evaporates without a single right being repealed, because there was never a right — only a competition.**

The hall they were sworn to maintain

One protection in this order did have an institutional body behind it, and its history is the clearest instance of factional residue in the collection.

The twenty-fifth article of the Union of Utrecht bound the stadholders, magistrates and chief officers of every province and town to swear to maintain all the *schutterijen*, brotherhoods and colleges within the towns of the Union.

It was written in 1579 for a reason that had nothing to do with liberty. The militia companies had refused to defend the churches in 1566 and had delivered the towns in 1572; they were the armed body actually present inside the walls; and the men drafting the treaty could not have excluded them and would not have wanted to. It was a term of the coalition, like the religion clause, extracted by a party whose cooperation had been necessary.

And it had a consequence nobody at Utrecht intended. It gave every town in the Republic a permanent, legally protected corporation of armed householders, with a membership roll, elected or appointed officers, an annual round of dinners and

portraits — and **premises**. The *doelen*: the militia halls, which the magistrates were sworn to maintain and could not close.

Fast forward a hundred and sixty-nine years. In the summer of 1748, following the tax-farmer riots, an eleven-article petition circulated among the Amsterdam civil militia demanding the election of the *vroedschap*, elected militia officers, an end to nepotism in the allocation of city posts, offices to be auctioned rather than given away, and the restoration of the guilds' privileges. On 9 August the first public meeting was held at the Kloveniersdoelen; the crowd was too large for the Rondeel hall and moved to the Grote Burgerzaal; hundreds signed. Commissioners were elected in most of the city's sixty militia districts. The movement took its name from the building: the *Doelisten*.

The magistrates of Amsterdam were, by an oath sworn in the founding treaty of the Republic, obliged to maintain the hall in which they were being confronted.

A concession extracted for reasons of force in one century becomes an institution in the next, and the later use of the institution has no relation to the intention behind the grant. That is the residue mechanism, and in this case it is physical: a roof, a floor, and a legal existence that could not be withdrawn.

Who took the residue in 1748

The events of 1747–48 are the cleanest illustration in this study of how a third party extracts anything at all, and of how little it usually gets.

The setting was a French invasion and a collapsing war. The second stadholderless period ended; William IV of Friesland was elevated to the stadholderate of all the provinces, and in November 1747 the office was made hereditary in both the male and female lines.

Now the crucial fact about the *Doelisten*: **they were Orangists.** Daniel Raap and the journalist Rousset de Missy agitated simultaneously for the restoration of the stadholderate and for more influence of the common people on a government dominated by the regents. They were a third party useful to one faction of the hierarchy against another, and they knew it.

So did the other faction. Jonathan Israel's reading of William's calculation is that he reckoned mob rule would cow the regents and make them pliable to his demands; when Amsterdam alone opposed making the stadholderate hereditary in both lines, Raap and Rousset organised more violence in the city and the proposal duly passed. In March 1748 there was mob violence in Groningen, and William declined to send federal troops to restore order until the Groningen States had made far-reaching concessions to him. In May, after violence in Friesland, the States there were brought to *request* a Government Regulation on the Utrecht model, stripping away their ancient

privileges. The States of Utrecht had already been compelled to readopt the Regulation of 1675; Gelderland and Overijssel followed.

Now do the accounting.

The Stadholder received: the hereditary stadholderate in both lines; the Government Regulations restored or newly imposed in Utrecht, Gelderland, Overijssel, Groningen and Friesland, giving him powers over appointments across the interior; and, generally across the Republic from 1748, the system by which he chose each town's magistrates from a shortlist.

The burghers received: the abolition of tax farming, which was real, durable and a genuine public benefit; and, essentially, nothing else. William refused to concede the election of militia officers, on the ground that in some towns burghers were not even eligible for those offices. In Amsterdam the guilds emerged forbidden to make their own rules or spend their own money.

From which the second general statement of this module: **the residue that survives a factional fight is the portion of the third party's demand that also suits the winner.** Tax farming was hated by the burghers and was also an obstacle to a stadholderly administration that wanted its revenue collected by its own appointed officers, so it went and never came back. Elected militia officers were wanted by the burghers and were a standing threat to whoever held the appointments, so they were refused. Nobody had to be cynical about it. The two demands simply had different relations to the winner's interest, and that relation, not the justice of the demand or the numbers behind it, decided which survived.

1785, and what happens with no faction to be useful to

The Patriots of the 1780s made the same demands as the *Doelisten* and rather more, and they lost everything, and the reason is the mechanism run in reverse.

They were not useful to anyone inside the hierarchy. They were against the Stadholder *and* against the regents. When they were briefly useful — in Utrecht in July 1783, where the *vroedschap* acceded to the Free Corps' demand to be recognised as the new form of the *schutterij*, under an elected Burgher Defence Council — they got a real concession, and it is worth noting exactly what it was: the conversion of the guaranteed militia into an elected body. That is the residue of 1579 being cashed at last, a hundred and four years later, into something recognisably a political right.

It lasted four years. In September 1787 a Prussian army restored William V, the Free Corps were broken and the Patriot leadership fled to France. Residue can be removed, and this residue was removed in a matter of weeks by a force from outside the arrangement altogether.

A third party extracts durable liberties only when it is useful to one faction of the hierarchy against another. A third party opposing the whole hierarchy extracts nothing, however numerous, until an outside force alters the balance. In 1795 the outside force arrived on the other side, and the things the Patriots had asked for in 1785 were granted within a year — by the French.

Reading liberty against the framework

Was there liberty in the Dutch Republic? Yes, a great deal, and it was real, and it was almost entirely private, and it rested on a mechanism quite different from the one it is usually credited to.

Three statements, of which the first is the module's contribution.

Jurisdictional competition supplies liberty only on questions where the jurisdictions have competing interests; where they concur, it supplies the completest foreclosure available, because there is no elsewhere. This is offered as the general form of what the Dutch case shows, and it is sharply testable: for any order with dispersed jurisdictions, sort the questions by whether a rival jurisdiction gains from taking in the dissenter. On the gaining side expect liberty so robust that no authority can suppress anything — the Republic could not keep Spinoza off a shelf. On the concurring side expect closure so complete that it needs no enforcement apparatus at all — the Republic excluded forty per cent of its people from office for two hundred years without one prosecution being necessary, because no town would have taken them in either.

The corollary is the part that ought to be uncomfortable. Liberty of this kind has no defender. It is not a right, so it cannot be invoked; it is not held by any body, so nothing is dissolved when it goes; and it disappears the moment the jurisdictions consolidate or simply come to agree, leaving every document in the archive exactly as it was.

Second: **a liberty asserted as a grievance against a former ruler is a complaint, not a liberty, and converts into one only when a body acquires the standing and the interest to enforce it against the present ruler.** The Dutch published the competent-judge privilege as a capital charge against a king in 1581 and violated it against their own first minister in 1619, and the reason is that the deposition created no court. The diagnostic: after any revolution, count the new institutions with standing against the new rulers. If there are none, the manifesto was a brief.

Third: **the residue of a factional fight is the part of the third party's demand that also suits the winner** — with the addendum that a concession granted for reasons of force can become, generations later, an institution used for purposes its authors would have hated. The militia clause of 1579 was a term extracted by the men

who had opened the gates in 1572. In 1748 their descendants used the halls it protected to summon a city against its magistrates, and in 1783 at Utrecht they briefly converted it into an elected body. **Liberties accrete not because anyone intends them but because institutions outlive the bargains that created them, and every such institution is a lever lying in the open for whoever next has a use for it.**

One last observation, entered plainly. Nothing in this module's analysis diminishes what the ordinary inhabitant of the Republic actually had, and it was more than almost anyone else in Europe had. The point is that he did not have it because it had been guaranteed to him. He had it because his rulers were divided into eighteen towns and seven provinces that could not agree, and because a man who was unwelcome in one of them could be in another by evening. That is a real freedom and a fragile one, and the distinction between the two kinds is the whole of what this module has to offer.

A note on sources.

One primary fragment is quoted, from a text quoted at length earlier in this study: the phrase from the Act of Abjuration of 26 July 1581 describing the great lords as having been set before a judge who was not their competent judge, *voor hem als niet wesende heurlieder competente Rechter gestelt*, from the text published by the Leiden *Dutch Revolt* project after De Blécourt and Japikse. The provisions of the Union of Utrecht referred to here — Article XIII on freedom of religion and Article XXV on the maintenance of the *schutterijen* — were quoted or described from the treaty text in earlier modules and are here described rather than requoted.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms. The account of the trial of Oldenbarnevelt, Grotius and Hogerbeets follows the standard sources: the arrest on 29 August 1618, the day after the States General conferred extraordinary powers on Maurice; the arraignment before a commission of twenty-four delegated judges on 20 February 1619; the trial running from November 1618 to May 1619; the sentence of 12 May and the execution on 13 May at the Binnenhof; life sentences for Grotius and Hogerbeets, and Grotius's escape in 1621. That only half the judges were Hollanders, that nearly all were political and personal enemies, that several were not qualified lawyers, and that the accused was denied writing materials, books, documents, witnesses and counsel, are as reported in the reference literature and in the summaries of Israel's account; the last of those details rests on a single encyclopaedia entry and is flagged accordingly. The characterisation of Oldenbarnevelt's jurisdictional defence as unassailable in theory is Britannica's; the observation that an ad hoc commission was necessary because the federal government had no judicial branch, and

that the same expedient was used in the Amboyna proceedings, is from the reference literature. The conviction for the subversion of religion and policy rather than for treason is Britannica's account.

The *Doelisten* material follows the standard Dutch accounts: the eleven-article petition circulating among the civil militia after the *Pachtersoproer*; its demands for the election of the *vroedschap* and of militia officers, an end to nepotism in city posts, the auctioning of vacant offices, the restoration of guild privileges and the transfer of postal revenues; the meeting of 9 August 1748 at the Kloveniersdoelen and the move to the Grote Burgerzaal; the election of commissioners in most of the sixty militia districts; Bentinck's mediation and the Stadholder's visit of 2 September. Pieter Geyl's description of the petition as a decisive democratic programme is reported at second hand. William IV's calculation that mob rule would cow the regents, his refusal to send federal troops to Groningen until concessions were made, the compelled readoption of the Utrecht Government Regulation of 1675 and its extension to Gelderland, Overijssel, Groningen and Friesland, and the Amsterdam episode over the hereditary succession in both lines, follow Jonathan Israel's account as summarised in the reference literature. That William refused the election of militia officers on the ground that in some towns burghers were not eligible for them, and that the Amsterdam guilds were left unable to make rules or spend their own money, are from the same body of material. The abolition of tax farming in 1748 was established from the fiscal literature earlier in this study.

The Utrecht concession of July 1783, by which the *vroedschap* recognised the Free Corps as the new manifestation of the *schutterij* under an elected Burgher Defence Council, and the Prussian intervention of September 1787, follow the standard accounts of the Patriot period.

The estimate that over forty per cent of the population belonged to churches other than the public one, and the exclusion of non-members from government, military command, the Bank of Amsterdam and the East India Company, are carried forward from the previous module with the same caveat: they rest on a modern summary rather than an audited count, and the confessional proportions varied sharply by province and by date.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where a detail rests on a single secondary source, that fact is stated.

MODULE 10

The Rivers Froze

Change and collapse — an order that ran all four of the cracks in sequence, overbreeding its elite, exhausting its treasury in a war it could not fight, fracturing so badly that a Prussian army had to close the split for it, and finally ending in a fortnight when the water that had been its floor turned solid; and the discovery that the towns went over in January 1795 by precisely the mechanism that had brought them in during the summer of 1572.

What did not happen

No peasant rising overthrew the Dutch Republic. No general strike, no jacquerie, no hungry crowd carried a demand for a different constitution through a breach in the floor.

That much the framework predicts everywhere, and this study has already established why it held here: the benefit column for an ordinary man in Holland was the fullest in Europe, the excises produced about twenty-four riots in a hundred and ninety-five years, and the largest of those attacked the collector rather than the rate. But the Dutch case adds a twist to the general law that is worth stating first, because it governs everything else in this module.

The popular energy of this order ran, consistently and for two centuries, in favour of the incumbent apex. The lower classes looked to the House of Orange. The crowds of 1747 and 1748 rioted *for* the restoration of the stadholderate and against the regents. The crowds of 1787 were Orangist. When William IV wanted the hereditary succession forced through against Amsterdam's opposition, the agitators he had at his disposal organised the necessary violence, and he calculated openly that mob rule would make the regents pliable to his demands. The crowd was a weight, and for most of the Republic's life it was a weight that only one faction of the hierarchy could swing.

The consequence is stark and it explains the whole shape of the ending. The men who eventually broke this order — the counter-elite of excluded, educated, propertied outsiders — could not swing that weight, because the population's attachment ran to the Prince they were attacking. So they had to find an army somewhere else.

Which yields a proposition to carry: **where a population's formation attaches it to the apex rather than to the counter-elite, the counter-elite cannot use it as a weight and must import its force from outside.** The Patriots discovered this in 1787 and acted on it in 1795.

Four cracks, in order

The framework holds that a floor cracks in four ways — the elite overbreeds, exhausts itself, fractures, or is conquered. The Dutch Republic ran all four, in that sequence, over roughly a century, and each one made the next more likely. What follows takes them in the order they arrived.

The first crack: more heirs than chairs

The earliest of the four is also the quietest, and this study has already recorded its physical tell without naming it as a crack.

From the second half of the seventeenth century the regent families of Holland began putting their arrangements into notarised *contracten van correspondentie*: written agreements to rotate the burgomasterships, the aldermanic benches, the treasurerships, the company chambers and the receiverships among named families in a stated order. By the eighteenth century they were general.

A class does not write down what has always gone without saying unless the informal understanding has stopped working, and the reason such understandings stop working is arithmetic. The number of seats in a Dutch town council was fixed — ten to forty men, appointed for life — and the number of regents' sons was not. When the claimants outgrow the chairs, the incumbents either widen the circle or ration it, and these families rationed it, in writing, before a notary.

At the same time a second and much larger surplus was accumulating outside the circle altogether. Over forty per cent of the Republic's population belonged to churches other than the public one, and every one of those people was barred from government office, from military command, from the Bank of Amsterdam and from the East India Company. In 1600 that exclusion described a poor and frightened minority. By 1780 it described a substantial share of the country's commercial capital, its manufacturers, its physicians, its lawyers and its pastors.

So by the middle of the eighteenth century the Republic had two surpluses: too many regents' sons for the seats their fathers held, and a large and growing body of prosperous, educated men who were structurally ineligible for any seat at all. That is elite overproduction in both of its forms at once.

And the leadership of what came is exactly who the framework predicts. Joan Derk van der Capellen tot den Pol: a nobleman of Overijssel, outside the Holland circuit entirely. François Adriaan van der Kemp: a Mennonite pastor at Leiden, excluded by confession. Pieter Vreede: a cloth manufacturer and a Remonstrant. Herman Willem Daendels: a lawyer from Hattem, a small town in Gelderland, who would end as a

French general. Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck: a lawyer. Not one of them a labourer, a peat-digger or a weaver. Every one of them a man with property, education and standing, formed for a position the arrangement had no intention of giving him.

The second crack: a treasury with nothing left to buy consent with

The exhaustion arrived in two stages, one slow and one sudden.

The slow stage is the fiscal history set out earlier in this study. Holland's provincial debt stood at roughly a hundred and fifty million guilders by the middle of the seventeenth century, close to three hundred million at the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, over four hundred million by 1750, and around five hundred million by 1780, with debt service consuming something like half of all revenue and Holland's rentier class drawing up to forty per cent of provincial income from interest. Alongside it ran a military demobilisation: an army that had exceeded a hundred and ten thousand men in the last years of the Spanish Succession war was cut to something on the order of forty thousand within two years of the peace, and was never rebuilt; the navy, in Britannica's phrase, was neglected for more than half a century.

Now recall the mechanism that had made the constitution workable. A unanimity rule survives only while one member is rich enough to purchase everyone else's consent by covering their arrears — and Holland had done that for two centuries at roughly fifty-eight per cent of the budget and often more. By the 1770s Holland's surplus was no longer a surplus. It had been converted into annuities, foreign loans and safe paper, held by the same families who sat in the councils, and the province's own revenue was half committed to servicing them before anything else was paid.

The coordination mechanism died before the state did. The Republic did not lose the ability to decide because its constitution changed; the constitution had always been unworkable. It lost the ability to decide because the thing that had substituted for a constitution — Holland's willingness and capacity to pay for everyone's agreement — had been lent out at four per cent.

Then came the sudden stage. Britain declared war on 20 December 1780, on the ground of Dutch commerce with the American rebels and the discovery of a draft Dutch-American treaty in Henry Laurens's papers. The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War was a catastrophe with almost no battles in it. The neglected navy could not protect the convoys and the attempt to do so produced disaster; Sint Eustatius, the Caribbean entrepôt, was taken in February 1781 with immense spoils; the one substantial engagement, at the Dogger Bank in August 1781, was inconclusive and bloody. The East India Company lost something approaching half its ships along with their cargoes; its debts passed a hundred million guilders and it survived on loans from the state it had

once financed. The Peace of Paris in 1784 took Negapatnam and gave the British free navigation in part of the Dutch East Indies.

A country whose entire position rested on carrying trade had discovered that it could no longer protect a convoy.

The third crack: the fracture, and who closed it

What followed is the fracture, and this study has traced its mechanics already: the pamphlet distributed from covered carriages on the night of 25–26 September 1781; the free corps subscribing privately for muskets and uniforms from 1784; the Utrecht *vroedschap* conceding in July 1783 that the free corps be recognised as the new form of the *schutterij* under an elected Burgher Defence Council; the Act of Association passed at a corps assembly in June 1785.

Two features of that fracture decided its outcome.

The first is that it did not run cleanly along a line inside the hierarchy. The Patriots were against the Stadholder *and* against the regents; a fracture in the framework's proper sense is one faction of the elite arming the people against another, and here neither faction wanted to arm anybody against the other, because both had more to fear from the third party than from each other. Some dissident regents joined. Most did not.

The second is what closed it. In September 1787 a Prussian army entered the Republic, restored William V, broke the free corps and drove the Patriot leadership into exile in France.

That is the diagnostic moment of the whole century. **An order that requires a foreign army to close its own fracture has already ceased to hold its own floor**; the restoration of 1787 looked like a victory for the arrangement and was in fact the announcement that the arrangement could no longer defend itself. The interlock described earlier in this study — every man holding six or seven streams, each defending the whole by defending himself — had worked without external assistance for two hundred years. In 1787 it needed a brother-in-law's regiments.

And the exiles in France were now a counter-elite with a grievance, a programme, a name and, shortly, an army.

The fourth crack: the water goes hard

The end took a fortnight and there was almost no fighting in it.

The French victory at Fleurus on 26 June 1794 broke the Coalition position in the Low Countries and opened the Republic's southern frontier. Then the winter of 1794–95 turned exceptionally severe, and the Waal, the Maas and the Lek froze.

Stop on that sentence, because it is the closing of a circle this study opened in its first module.

The defence of the Dutch Republic was water. Not fortresses and not an army: the Water Line, the deliberate flooding of the polders, the same instrument that had been used at Brielle in April 1572, at Alkmaar in 1573, and decisively at Leiden in the autumn of 1574, when Orange had the dikes cut over the objections of the people who maintained them and the Beggar fleet came across drowned pasture to relieve the city. That instrument had turned back Louis XIV in 1672. It was the country's one great strategic asset and it had been built by five hundred years of drainage labour.

Ice does not care about a water line. A flooded polder under a hard frost is a road, and a frozen river is a bridge that a cavalry regiment can cross at any point along its length. The Republic's whole defensive apparatus became, in a few weeks of weather, the fastest surface in Europe for an invading army.

Pichegru's Army of the North began crossing on about 14 January 1795. Utrecht surrendered on the 16th, after the Prussian troops garrisoning the province had evacuated it. Dutch units defected in numbers. On 18 January armed civilians in Amsterdam, organised by Patriot committees under leaders including Pieter Vreede and Daendels, summoned the city council to disband and replaced it with a provisional revolutionary committee of twenty-one members; the transfer took place without violence. On the same day William V embarked for England. French troops entered Amsterdam unopposed on the 19th. On the 23rd the Dutch fleet, frozen into the ice at Den Helder, was taken.

Something like twenty thousand French troops entered the Dutch cities against negligible opposition, out of a larger force in the theatre that the literature variously puts at up to ninety thousand. There was no battle for the Republic.

The mechanism was the founding mechanism

There is a live disagreement among historians about what 1795 was, and the framework can adjudicate it, because it has already described this exact event once.

Simon Schama's reading is that it was a genuine Dutch revolution: Patriot committees rising in the cities, taking their own governments, and opening the gates to the French. The opposing reading is that it was a conquest, and that the proof is 1787 — when the Patriots tried it without a French army and were destroyed in weeks by a Prussian one.

Both readings are correct, and the reason they are both correct is that this is the same mechanism the Republic was founded by.

Set the two events side by side.

In the summer of 1572: an armed force far too small to storm anything — six hundred men at Brielle, of whom two hundred landed. A faction inside each town prepared to open the gate. A civic militia that would not fight to prevent it. Commissions issued on paper, in the name of a lawful authority, supplying the reason. The towns went over one at a time, over ten weeks, and there was no battle in Holland worth the name.

In January 1795: an armed force far too small to besiege eighteen walled towns in a fortnight. A Patriot committee inside each town prepared to open the gate. A civic militia that would not fight to prevent it. Proclamations supplying the reason. The towns went over one at a time, over about ten days, and there was no battle for the Republic.

The Republic was defected into existence and it was defected out of existence, by the identical procedure, two hundred and twenty-three years apart.

And the reason is structural rather than poetic. **An order acquired by defection remains permanently vulnerable to defection, because the feature that made it cheap to acquire — the absence of any internal floor pointed at its own towns — is never afterwards built.** It cannot be built, because the whole constitution of such an order is a set of guarantees that no such instrument will ever exist. The Union of Utrecht bound the frontier towns to accept garrisons and required those garrisons to swear a particular oath to the town they were quartered in. It bound every magistrate to maintain the burgher militia. It reserved to every town and province its privileges against the Union itself. There was never a garrison in Leiden pointed at Leiden, in 1572 or in 1795, because the men who wrote the constitution had come to power by being the sort of people such a garrison would have stopped.

From which the module's contribution: **the mechanism of an order's founding is the template of its ending.** Where a floor was taken by storm, expect it to be lost by storm. Where it was taken by defection, expect it to be lost by defection — and expect the interval to be long, because the vulnerability is structural and dormant, invisible in every year when no armed party happens to be standing outside the gate.

What the ruled did, and what it was worth

The framework's honest objection has to be paid here, because the pressure from below in this order was real and was not nothing.

It was real in 1748: the tax riots that began in Friesland and Groningen and reached Amsterdam on 17 June were genuine popular action, they frightened the regents, and William IV used them deliberately — declining to send federal troops to Groningen until the States there conceded, and calculating that mob rule would cow the regents into pliability. The crowd was the weight on the lever and the lever moved. It was real again in January 1795: the Amsterdam council was summoned to disband by armed civilians.

But note what the weight bought in each case, and who worked the lever.

In 1748 the burghers got the abolition of tax farming — real and durable — and lost every political demand they had made, while the Stadholder got the hereditary succession in both lines and the appointment power across five provinces. The weight was swung, and it was swung by a faction of the hierarchy, and the residue that survived was the portion of the demand that also suited the winner.

In 1795 the Amsterdam council obeyed the crowd because Utrecht had fallen two days earlier and twenty thousand French soldiers were on the way. The committee that replaced it was composed of lawyers, manufacturers and pastors. The revolution delivered to the Dutch what the Patriots had asked for in 1785, and it delivered it because a French army had crossed the ice.

The line to hold is the one the framework insists on. The pressure from below raised the standing cost of the settlement continuously for fifty years, made the fracture worth exploiting, and determined what the winners had to concede to keep people mobilised. It was never the agent. The agent, on each of the four cracks, was a section of the hierarchy or a foreign army — and on the last and decisive one, both at once.

Reading collapse against the framework

The Dutch Republic ran all four cracks and the sequence is legible: it overbred its claimants from the later seventeenth century, exhausted its fiscal and military capacity across the eighteenth, fractured in the 1780s, and was conquered in 1795. Each crack widened the next. The overbreeding supplied the counter-elite; the exhaustion supplied the grievance and destroyed the surplus that had held the constitution together; the fracture supplied the organisation and, when it failed, drove that organisation abroad to where an army was; the conquest supplied the army.

Three statements, of which the first is the module's contribution.

The mechanism of an order's founding is the template of its ending, because the founding mechanism reveals the structural gap that the order can never close without ceasing to be itself. The Dutch were taken by defection in 1572 and lost by defection in 1795. In neither year could any authority in the Republic compel a town

that had decided to go, and in neither year did anyone try, because the instrument for compelling a town was the one thing the founders had come to power by not having. Where a study finds an order whose floor was acquired without a battle, it should expect that order to be lost without one, and should look — in every intervening century — for whether an internal floor was ever built. Usually it was not, and usually the reason is in the constitution.

Second, on the exhaustion crack in an order of this particular type. **Where a coordination problem has been solved not by an institution but by one member's surplus, the coordination fails when the surplus is converted into a claim on the future rather than a stock of cash.** Holland's ability to cover the arrears of six other provinces was the Republic's actual constitution for two centuries. By 1780 that ability had been lent out at four per cent to the very families who exercised it, and the paper constitution — which had never worked and had never needed to — was all that was left.

Third, on the popular weight. **A crowd attached by formation to the incumbent apex cannot be swung by the counter-elite, and where that is the case the counter-elite must import its force.** This follows directly from the earlier finding that the Republic never formed a nation: what formation there was ran through the household, the congregation and the town, and the one figure who commanded anything like a national popular attachment was the Prince of Orange. So the men who wanted to break the arrangement found the crowd standing on the other side of it — in 1747, in 1748, and decisively in 1787 — and had no option but to go to Paris. **The absence of a national formation, which cost this order very little for two centuries, cost it everything at the end, because it meant the only available popular loyalty belonged to the apex, and the counter-elite had to borrow an army instead.**

One last observation, entered plainly rather than argued. The Republic in 1795 was not poor. It was still one of the wealthiest societies on earth; its people still ate better than most of Europe; its capital was still enormous, which is precisely why it had been lent abroad. The order did not fall because the cost column at the bottom had become unbearable. It fell because the men who held it had stopped being able to project force, could no longer buy each other's agreement, had bred more claimants than they could seat, and had excluded a rich and educated minority for two hundred years on a rule written when that minority was poor. Every one of those is a fact about the hierarchy. None of them is a fact about the weaver in Leiden, whose position in 1795 was very much what it had been in 1650, and who watched the whole thing happen.

A note on sources.

No primary text is quoted in this module.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms, and several figures come from series that do not agree. The fiscal figures — Holland's debt at roughly 150 million guilders by the mid-seventeenth century, close to 300 million in 1713, over 400 million by 1750 and around 500 million by 1780, with service consuming about half of revenue and rentiers drawing up to forty per cent of provincial income from interest — are carried forward from the earlier module on extraction with the same caveats. The demobilisation figures, an army above 110,000 in the last years of the War of the Spanish Succession reduced to about 40,000 by 1715, come from a modern encyclopaedic summary rather than from a specialist study and should be treated as indicative. Britannica supplies the judgement that the navy had been neglected for more than half a century and that convoying attempts brought only disaster.

The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War is described from the standard accounts: the British declaration of 20 December 1780 following the moves toward the League of Armed Neutrality and the discovery of the draft Dutch-American treaty in Henry Laurens's papers; the capture of Sint Eustatius in February 1781; the inconclusive action at the Dogger Bank; and the Peace of Paris of 1784 ceding Negapatnam and conceding British navigation rights in part of the Dutch East Indies. That the Company lost nearly half its ships and much of their cargo, that its debts passed a hundred million guilders, and that it depended on state loans, are from the secondary literature on the VOC's decline; the dates of nationalisation and dissolution vary between accounts, which give 1795 or 1796 for the takeover, a formal winding-up decision of 18 March 1798, and dissolution in 1799.

The events of January 1795 follow the standard chronologies, with variations noted. The French victory at Fleurus on 26 June 1794; the exceptional severity of the winter of 1794–95 and the freezing of the Waal, Maas and Lek; the crossing from about 14 January; the surrender of Utrecht, which the sources date to 16 or 17 January, accepted by General Souham after the Prussian troops under Wallmoden-Gimborn had evacuated the province; the disbanding of the Amsterdam council on 18 January and its replacement by a provisional committee of twenty-one, without violence, organised by Patriot leaders including Pieter Vreede and Herman Willem Daendels; William V's departure for England on 18 January; the unopposed entry of French troops on 19 January; and the taking of the ice-bound fleet at Den Helder on 23 January. Troop numbers are reported inconsistently: approximately twenty thousand men are described as entering the Dutch cities, while Pichegru's force in the theatre is elsewhere put at around ninety thousand, and this module reports both rather than choosing.

The historiographical disagreement over whether 1795 was a revolution or a conquest is described as the literature describes it, with Simon Schama's *Patriots and Liberators* cited for the revolution reading and the opposing case summarised from the reference literature. Neither position is quoted.

The *contracten van correspondentie*, the confessional exclusion from office and the estimate that over forty per cent of the population belonged to other churches, the tax-riot count of about twenty-four between 1600 and 1795, the *Doelisten* material and William IV's calculation regarding mob violence, and the Patriot chronology from 1781 to 1787, are all carried forward from earlier modules of this study with the caveats recorded there; in particular the confessional proportion rests on a single modern summary and varies sharply by province and date.

The biographical identifications of the counter-elite — Van der Capellen as an Overijssel nobleman, Van der Kemp as a Mennonite pastor at Leiden, Vreede as a cloth manufacturer and Remonstrant, Daendels as a lawyer from Hattem, Schimmelpenninck as a lawyer — are from the standard reference literature.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where figures conflict the conflict is recorded rather than resolved.

MODULE 11

Three Hundred Thousand, and Never Fifty

The grim accounting — what an order that killed remarkably few of its own people at home cost in the two hemispheres where it did its dying; a metabolic note that was never called because it was never not due, serviced in instalments by flood, murrain and a mollusc that ate the sea defences; and the reason a country remembered Naarden and Leiden for four hundred years and did not remember Banda at all.

Two ledgers

An armed faction took two provinces in the summer of 1572, held the thing it built for two hundred and twenty-three years, and lost it in a fortnight in January 1795. This module totals what that cost.

There are two columns. The first is the sword: what was killed to make the arrangement, to hold it, and to extend it. The second is the metabolic note — the debt an advanced order runs up when coordination and intensive agriculture lift a population above what its ground would otherwise carry, so that any interruption of the coordination calls in the difference and it is paid in hunger and disease.

In most of the cases in this collection the second column is settled in a lump, at the end, when a conquest or a collapse breaks the machinery. This one is different in a way that turns out to be the module's finding, and the difference is visible in the first column too. So both are set out at length, and the totals are given as ranges wherever the record will not support a number, which is most of the time.

The sword at home

Take the domestic column first, because it is the smaller one and because the reader ought to know that before the larger one arrives.

The founding cost what a long siege war costs. Haarlem held for seven months and surrendered on terms in July 1573; the town bought itself free of sack for two hundred and forty thousand guilders and the garrison of some thousands was put to death anyway, the Germans excepted, with forty burghers executed for sedition and many of the remainder drowned in the Spaarne when the executioners ran short. Naarden surrendered on terms on 22 November 1572 and its people were assembled in a church

and killed on 1 December; the reported figure is about three thousand and it rests on a narrow base. Zutphen was stormed on 17 November and hundreds died. Leiden held from May to October 1574 and lost something like six thousand of its perhaps fifteen to eighteen thousand people to hunger and disease. At Oudewater in 1575 something approaching half the town may have died. Alba's Council of Troubles handed down roughly a thousand to eleven hundred capital sentences; the wider totals attributed to his governorship — eighteen thousand from his own reported claim, six thousand from Requesens, fifty thousand in some general estimates — are all treated by modern historians as unfounded or inflated, and this study gives no figure. Before any of that, at least thirteen hundred people had been executed for heresy in these provinces between 1523 and 1566, and the true number is higher by an unknown margin.

Set against eighty years of war, the sieges of Ostend and 's-Hertogenbosch and Breda, the four Anglo-Dutch wars, the Franco-Dutch war and the two great coalition wars around 1700, the aggregate for the Low Countries runs into hundreds of thousands and cannot be given with any precision at all.

But once the Republic existed, it killed very few of its own subjects. Its judicial executions were unremarkable for the period. Its political killings can be listed: Oldenbarnevelt in 1619, Koerbagh dead in an Amsterdam gaol in 1669, the De Witt brothers torn apart by a crowd in 1672, three hangings after the tax riots of 1748 with perhaps two hundred more crushed or drowned in the panic at the scaffold. Nineteen Catholic clergy were hanged at Brielle in July 1572 in the first summer, and after that the Republic's treatment of its Catholic third consisted, in the main, of fines, exclusion and purchased connivance.

That is a genuinely low domestic total for a European state of that duration, and it is not an accident. It follows directly from the two things this study has already established: a benefit column full enough that compliance was rational, and an order that had never built an internal apparatus of coercion because it had never been able to.

The reason it is nonetheless a misleading total is that this order had a mechanism for locating its mortality somewhere else.

The men who did not come back

Between 1595 and 1795 the East India Company and its predecessors sent something approaching one million men from the Netherlands to Asia. Roughly one in three returned.

Some care is owed to that figure. Not every man who failed to come back died: some settled in Asia, some deserted, some entered private trade or local service, some were discharged there. But the great majority died — of dysentery, fever, scurvy, shipwreck,

and in the Company's wars — and the aggregate of those who left on a Company ship and were never seen in Europe again is on the order of half a million to six hundred thousand men, across two centuries.

Two things about that number belong in this ledger.

The first is where it sits. It is larger, probably by a considerable margin, than everything the Eighty Years' War cost the northern provinces. The Dutch Republic's greatest single source of premature death was not its war of independence. It was its own trading company's employment contract.

The second is who bore it. Around forty per cent of the sailors and sixty per cent of the soldiers were not Dutch at all — Germans above all, and Scandinavians and other northern Europeans, recruited at Amsterdam through the lodging-house keepers who advanced them kit and lodging against a claim on wages they would not live to collect. So the Republic imported its labour and exported its mortality, and did both across a border. The peace and health of a Holland town and the death rate on the Batavia run are not two separate facts about this order. They are the same arrangement described from two ends.

The sword in Asia

The Company's wars are recorded in the previous modules and are collected here without softening.

Banda in 1621: a pre-conquest population usually put at around fifteen thousand, of whom something like fourteen thousand were killed, starved, enslaved or driven off within a campaign and its aftermath, with perhaps a thousand survivors deported to Batavia and some forty of the *orang kaya* beheaded and quartered by Japanese mercenaries and their remains displayed. The figures conflict in every particular and the honest statement is that the population of the islands was substantially destroyed and replaced by imported slaves working leased plantations.

Ambon and the Lease Islands: a clove monopoly enforced by annual armed patrols that uprooted trees, punished smugglers and compelled deliveries, manned by corvée rowers drawn one man to each landholding group, running from the seventeenth century to the last expedition in 1821, with punitive expeditions, forced relocations of villages and the destruction of food crops as instruments of policy.

Ceylon: a hereditary caste obligation to peel cinnamon, intensified under the Company beyond what the Portuguese had required, enforced with mutilation, chains, whipping and branding, and legislated against escape by a rule that marriage into a lower caste did not release a man from the duty; risings in 1736 and a war from 1760 to 1766.

Java, Makassar, Ternate, Formosa, Banjarmasin: a two-century sequence of campaigns, punitive expeditions and interventions in local successions, for which no aggregate exists.

And Batavia, from 9 to 22 October 1740. Sugar prices collapsed, the Chinese labouring population of the city fell into unemployment and vagrancy, the Governor-General ordered the arrest of the unemployed, a curfew was imposed and armed patrols were urged — and the result was ten days in which somewhere between five thousand and more than ten thousand ethnic Chinese residents were killed, which was very nearly the whole urban community. The killing was done by Dutch burghers, by Company soldiers, and by enslaved people, together.

That episode deserves a sentence of structural notice rather than a shudder. It began as a market failure. A city that had been specialised for a single export lost the export, and the people whose livelihood had been organised around it became, in the governor's reading, a security problem. **Where an order has converted a population into the labour force of one commodity, a price collapse in that commodity arrives as a political emergency**, and what happens next is decided by who is armed.

The arithmetic of Suriname

The Atlantic column contains the single hardest fact in this study, and it is best stated without commentary.

Dutch ships carried something on the order of half a million Africans into slavery across the whole period. Of these, roughly three hundred thousand were landed in Suriname between 1668 and 1823.

The enslaved population of Suriname never exceeded about fifty thousand. It stood at perhaps sixty thousand in the early 1770s, and at about thirty-six thousand when slavery was abolished on 1 July 1863 — after which the freed people were required to work a further ten years for payment.

Three hundred thousand imported. Never fifty thousand alive at once.

The gap is mortality, and it was structural rather than incidental. Deaths exceeded births continuously, because of workloads, tropical disease, malnutrition and violent discipline, and the shortfall was made up by fresh purchase for as long as purchase was possible. In the 1770s the ratio was something like one white person to sixty-five enslaved. Manumission ran at well under one per cent a year. The Scottish-Dutch soldier John Gabriel Stedman, who served five years in Suriname from 1773 in the campaigns against the maroons and published his narrative in 1796, described a group of Africans being taken to sale as "walking skeletons covered over with a piece of tanned leather".

This is the clean instance of the framework's stock-and-flow fork. An order taking a flow tunes the rate to keep the producer alive, because the producer is the asset. An order that can replace the producer by purchase has no such constraint, and the rate it sets is therefore whatever maximises output over the individual's working life rather than over his lifetime. The Suriname regime was not badly calibrated. It was calibrated to a market in replacements, and it stopped being calibrated that way only when the trade closed.

The note that was never not due

Now the second column, and this is where the Dutch case departs from the pattern.

The framework's expectation is that an advanced order lifts its population above the ground's natural carrying capacity by coordination and intensification, so that the population is, in effect, borrowing against the machinery — and when a conquest or a collapse breaks the machinery, the note is called and paid in famine and epidemic.

The first half of that describes Holland exactly, and more literally than anywhere else in this collection. The ground was manufactured. Drained peat oxidises and sinks at something like a metre a century, so that within two generations of the first colonists the fields lay below the water and the rivers ran above them. That land was held habitable only by dikes, sluices and mills maintained continuously by a jurisdiction older than the Republic. And because the same subsidence had made the soil too wet for grain, the population ate Baltic rye brought in ships. Two separate life-support systems, both dependent on uninterrupted coordination, neither capable of being switched off for a season.

But the second half does not describe Holland, because **the note was never called, for the reason that it was never not due.** There was no moment at which the machinery broke and the accumulated deficit arrived. Instead the debt was serviced continuously, in instalments, throughout the order's life, and the instalments are on the record.

On the night of 1 to 2 November 1570 — fifteen months before Brielle — the greatest storm surge of the pre-modern era broke the dikes along the whole coast from Flanders to Groningen. The Duke of Alba wrote to Philip II that five-sixths of Holland was under water. The death toll is genuinely unknown and the reported figures run from two thousand upward through three thousand in Friesland alone to twenty or twenty-five thousand across the whole affected coast; the honest statement is that tens of thousands were made homeless, that winter stocks and fodder were destroyed, that villages and islands vanished permanently, and that nobody counted the dead.

Then the deliberate breaches: 1574 at Leiden, 1672 against the French, and lesser ones throughout — a country using its own life-support system as a weapon, and salting its arable for years each time.

Then the Christmas Flood of 1717, which killed over thirteen thousand seven hundred people in Groningen and along the North Sea coast, salted the land, and destroyed livestock on a great scale.

Then the cattle plague, in two long waves — 1713 to 1720 and 1744 to 1764 — which killed over a million cattle in the Netherlands. In a countryside that had gone over to dairying two centuries earlier because the ground had grown too wet for grain, that is not a farming setback. It is the destruction of the province's productive base twice in fifty years.

And then, in the autumn of 1730, dike inspectors in Zeeland found a mollusc in the wooden wave-breakers that protected the sea dikes. *Teredo navalis*, the shipworm, had bored through the pilings and honeycombed them so that they snapped in a minor storm. Over the next five years the infestation spread along the coast and the Republic discovered that its entire timber sea defence had to be rebuilt in stone.

Hold the date. In 1730 something like half of Holland's revenue was already committed to servicing a provincial debt of several hundred million guilders, held largely by the families who sat in the councils. The bill for the sea defences arrived at the one moment the treasury had no room for it.

From which the module's contribution: **where an order's ground is itself manufactured, the metabolic note is not called at the end. It is serviced continuously, and the order's real capacity must always be read net of a maintenance obligation that never falls due and never goes away.** And the obligation escalates without warning — a metre of subsidence a century, a murrain, a surge, an invasive mollusc — so that an order of this kind is peculiarly exposed to a coincidence between a maintenance shock and a fiscal commitment. The eighteenth-century Dutch had precisely that coincidence, and it is a real part of why the exhaustion described in the previous module was as complete as it was.

There is a diagnostic in it. **For any order that manufactured its own ground — polder, terrace, qanat, irrigation network, levee — do not look for the metabolic reckoning at the collapse. Look at the maintenance line in every generation's accounts, and ask what else that generation was committed to.**

Where the note was called in the ordinary way

And where the Dutch order did create the classic carrying-capacity dependence, it did so overseas, on other people's ground.

Banda was converted from a mixed subsistence economy with a spice export into a nutmeg monoculture worked by imported slaves, and its food thereafter came in ships. Ambon's *dati* lands, which had carried sago and fruit alongside a few dozen clove trees per family, were converted into territorially defined delivery units bound to produce fixed quotas of a single crop; the record includes food destruction and village relocation as instruments of enforcement. The Salagama of Ceylon were bound hereditarily to cinnamon and pulled off whatever else they would have done. Java was put into coffee.

Every one of those substitutes a single export crop and a distant supplier for local subsistence, which is the arrangement that converts a bad year into a famine. The 1740 Batavia killing is that mechanism firing in its commercial rather than its agricultural form.

So the metabolic note in this order was split like everything else in it: serviced continuously at home in floods, murrain and rebuilt dikes; and loaded onto populations six months' sail away, where it was called in the ordinary way and where nobody in Amsterdam had any occasion to count it.

What was remembered, and what was not

The first half of the grim accounting is the framework's observation that after enough time people forget that violence made the arrangement, and it needs a qualification here, because the Dutch did not forget. They remembered vividly, ritually, and at length.

Leiden's relief on 3 October 1574 was commemorated annually and still is. Haarlem's siege, Naarden's massacre, Alba's Council of Troubles, the Blood Placard, the burnings of the 1550s: all of these were the furniture of Dutch national memory by 1700, rehearsed in pulpits, prints, histories and the founding song. The Revolt was not forgotten. It was the story.

What was forgotten was the other column. Banda produced no commemoration. Neither did the Ambon patrols, the Salagama, the Suriname arithmetic or the men who did not come back from the Batavia run.

And the asymmetry has a mechanism, which this study has already identified. The violence the Dutch suffered was suffered by the people who told the story, in towns whose descendants still lived there, and it was recorded as violence. The violence the Dutch did was done at a distance, by a chartered body with its own courts and its own accounts, and it was recorded as **commerce**. A compulsory delivery at an administered price is entered as a purchase. A man dead of fever off Ceylon is a wage account closed. A slave who did not survive is a depreciated asset. Not one of those entries is false, and not one of them looks like a killing on the page.

So the general statement, and it is uncomfortable: **an order forgets the violence it did far faster than the violence it suffered, and the instrument of forgetting is not censorship but accounting.** Where a thing was never recorded as a killing, it does not have to be suppressed later. There is nothing there to suppress; there is only a ledger, correctly kept, in which the entry sits under an ordinary heading, and a reader can go through it line by line for two centuries and never find the war.

Reading the accounting against the framework

The totals, given as the record allows and no better.

The sword at home: hundreds of thousands across eighty years of war and the subsequent European conflicts, with no usable aggregate; roughly a thousand to eleven hundred judicial killings by the Council of Troubles; at least thirteen hundred executions for heresy before 1566; and, once the Republic existed, a domestic political and judicial toll that can be listed by name in a paragraph.

The sword abroad: something on the order of half a million to six hundred thousand men who left on Company ships and did not return, most of them not Dutch; the substantial destruction of the population of Banda; five to over ten thousand killed at Batavia in ten days in 1740; two centuries of enforcement campaigns in the archipelago and Ceylon for which no total exists; and roughly half a million Africans carried in Dutch ships, of whom about three hundred thousand went to a colony whose enslaved population never reached fifty thousand at one time and stood at thirty-six thousand at abolition.

The metabolic column: not a reckoning but a standing charge — a manufactured ground sinking a metre a century, an imported food supply, and instalments paid in the flood of 1570, the deliberate breaches of 1574 and 1672, the Christmas Flood of 1717 with over thirteen thousand seven hundred dead, over a million cattle in two murrain waves between 1713 and 1764, and the rebuilding of the sea defences in stone after 1730 — plus, overseas, the ordinary carrying-capacity debt loaded onto populations converted to monoculture, which was called in the ordinary way and never counted.

Three statements follow.

Where an order manufactured the ground it stands on, the metabolic note is serviced continuously rather than called at the end, and it escalates without notice. Read the maintenance line in each generation, and note what else that generation had already promised.

A chartered-company order displaces its sword ledger in both directions: the dying happens abroad, and it is done disproportionately by men recruited from other countries. The low domestic death toll of the Dutch Republic is not evidence of

a gentle order. It is evidence of an order with a mechanism for locating mortality outside its own borders and staffing it with other nations' surplus young men. The metropolitan peace and the frontier mortality are one fact.

And the instrument by which an order forgets what it did is its bookkeeping. Suppression is not required where the act was never recorded as an act. This is the same finding the module on extraction reached from the other end, and it is worth restating here because it is what makes an accounting of this kind necessary at all: the entries are all correct, the totals all balance, and the war is not in them.

A note on sources.

One primary quotation appears, at eleven words: John Gabriel Stedman's description, in his *Narrative of a Five Years Expedition Against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam* (published 1796, public domain), of a group of Africans being taken to be sold. I have not consulted the original edition; the phrase reaches me through the Victoria and Albert Museum's catalogue description of a plate from the work, and is quoted on that authority. The Duke of Alba's report to Philip II that five-sixths of Holland lay under water after the flood of 1570 is described rather than quoted, from a secondary account of the flood; I have not seen the letter.

Modern scholarship is paraphrased and credited in general terms, and every figure in this module is an estimate.

Figures carried forward from earlier modules of this study — the siege tolls at Haarlem, Naarden, Zutphen, Leiden and Oudewater; the Council of Troubles range and the rejection of the wider totals attributed to Alba and Requesens; the heresy executions of 1523–1566; the VOC personnel figures and the proportion of foreign recruits; the Banda estimates; the Ceylon and Ambon material; and the Atlantic slave-trade totals — retain the caveats recorded there, and several of them rest on single modern summaries.

The Suriname arithmetic is drawn from two sources that broadly agree: an estimate of three hundred thousand enslaved people imported between 1668 and 1823 with a population never exceeding fifty thousand, from the Victoria and Albert Museum's historical note; and a modern encyclopaedic account giving a decline from roughly sixty thousand in the early 1770s to thirty-six thousand by 1863, with deaths continuously exceeding births, a ratio of about one white person to sixty-five enslaved, and manumission below one per cent annually. The date of abolition, 1 July 1863, and the ten-year period of compelled labour that followed, are as standardly given.

The 1740 Batavia massacre is described from the standard accounts: 9 to 22 October 1740, precipitated by collapsing sugar prices and unemployment and by Governor-

General Valckenier's order for the arrest of the unemployed; a death toll variously given as at least ten thousand or as between five thousand and over ten thousand, amounting to nearly the entire urban Chinese community; and participation by Dutch burghers, Company soldiers and enslaved people. W. R. van Hoëvell's nineteenth-century description of the killing is noted in that literature but is not quoted here.

The metabolic material rests principally on Adam Sundberg's work — his 2015 Kansas dissertation and the book that followed — for the Christmas Flood of 1717 with over 13,700 deaths, the shipworm epidemic of 1730 to 1735 and its discovery in the Zeeland wave-breakers in the autumn of 1730, and the two cattle plagues of 1713–20 and 1744–64 killing over a million cattle in the Netherlands. The All Saints' Flood of 1 to 2 November 1570 is reported with its full range of estimates precisely because they cannot be reconciled: the sources give figures from above two thousand, through more than three thousand in Friesland alone, to twenty thousand and up to twenty-five thousand overall, and the Dutch reference literature itself warns that the casualty figures rest on rough estimates and should be viewed sceptically. The subsidence rate of roughly a metre a century is the figure given in the Dutch regional literature and is an order of magnitude, not a constant.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory. Where figures conflict, the conflict is recorded rather than resolved, and where no aggregate exists this module says so rather than supplying one.

MODULE 12

The Same Men, the Same Decade

Convergence and divergence — what this order shares with every other in the collection and where it departs; a governmental form the framework had not previously had to describe; and the strongest case that can be made for the Dutch Republic, set out at its full strength and answered without softening either side of it.

What holds here as it holds everywhere

Begin with the convergences, quickly, because they are the least interesting part of the answer and because they need stating before the departures can mean anything.

The floor was real and it came first. Two provinces changed hands in ten weeks in 1572 because armed men arrived and other armed men declined to stop them, and everything afterwards — the settlement, the charters, the theory of ancient liberty — was written on top of that fact and after it.

The legitimating account was borrowed and never minted. The rebels of 1572 borrowed the King's own authority; the manifesto of 1581 borrowed the contractual idiom of a Brabant charter of 1356; and when no living prince in Europe would lend his name to the arrangement, they borrowed from antiquity instead and discovered a constitution eight hundred years old.

The hierarchy defended the arrangement out of self-interest, without needing to coordinate and without needing to like one another. Structural change, when it came, came from the hierarchy's own fracture, exhaustion and conquest, and not from the people at the bottom, whose principal political act across two centuries was a riot against a tax collector that ended with the collector replaced and the tax unchanged.

Nobody went unformed. Where the state did not form a child, a church did; where a church could not, a woman in a kitchen did.

And the surplus ran upward, at rates the people paying it could not vote on, into the hands of the people who set them.

All of that is the framework working normally. What follows is where this case pushed back.

Three families of divergence

The departures accumulated over eleven modules fall into three groups, and each group turns on a single structural fact about this order.

The first family comes from a floor taken by defection. The towns were not stormed in 1572; they were handed over from inside by militias that would not fight and factions that were ready. That single fact generated the constitution: a floor acquired unit by unit is bought unit by unit, each unit's price is its own consent, and the resulting order inherits as many vetoes as it had defections — immediately, before any theory exists to justify them. Orange's undertaking not to govern Holland without the States was given in the same week the gates opened. And because such an order is founded by people whom an internal garrison would have stopped, it never builds one; so it remains permanently vulnerable to the mechanism that made it, and it was still vulnerable two hundred and twenty-three years later, when the towns went over again in ten days.

That family also explains why the settlement paid in offices rather than estates. There was no conquered land to distribute — the ground had been a commodity since it was manufactured under contract five centuries earlier — and what the winners took was position, which is a different kind of property with different politics attached. An elite paid in offices is bound to the constitutional *form* rather than to any possession, so its crises take the shape of purges rather than confiscations, and its members are unpurchaseable because each holds five or six separate streams that no outside party can replace at once.

The second family comes from an order that ran its frontier through a chartered body. The extraction at that frontier was performed by the price and recorded as a purchase; the whole levy lives in the spread between an administered price and a market the grower could not reach, and that spread is not a line item anywhere. The accounts are honest and the war is not in them. The concealment was therefore double and required nobody to lie: the extraction was booked as commerce, and the books were never opened — for a hundred and ninety-seven years, without a serious breach, in a country that could not keep Spinoza off a shelf for a decade.

That family also produced the variance which is this study's central measurement. One order ran the lowest coercion in Europe at its centre and among the highest anywhere at its edge, through the same institutions, decided by the same men, and the two settings were never compared because comparison requires somebody standing where both are visible and the corporate form removed that position.

The third family comes from an order that never built a centre. No pre-publication licence anywhere, because no jurisdiction was large enough to run one; so

censorship shifted from content to audience and its instrument became language — Latin tolerated, Dutch prosecuted, the vernacular translation of the *Tractatus* held out of print for twenty-three years while the Latin circulated. No national formation, because the schoolmaster was appointed by a town council and the Synod could only *request* that the magistrate appoint a suitable one; so several formations ran in parallel and the population sorted into confessional communities that became the load-bearing political divisions, three centuries before anyone called it pillarisation. No unified calendar, for a hundred and eighteen years. And no rights-enforcement machinery at all, so that what protected an ordinary man was not a right but a rival jurisdiction twenty miles away with a reason to want him — a liberty that was total on every question where the towns competed and absent on every question where they agreed.

An object the framework had not needed

Out of the second family comes the one genuinely new thing this case contributes to the collection, and it is worth naming plainly, because the framework has previously handled empires and has not previously had to handle a company.

The East India Company was not a business that acquired governmental powers. It was a **governmental form that acquired an accounting convention**, and the convention is what made it different from every imperial administration that preceded it.

Consider what a viceroy does. He levies a tribute, and it is entered in a fiscal record as a tribute, at a rate, with a name; his despatches go to a council; his conduct is a matter of state; and when he clears an island, somebody in the metropole eventually has to defend it as policy, because policy is the category the act was recorded in. Every prior extractive order in this collection has that property somewhere in it: the thing is written down as what it is.

The Company changed the category. A compulsory delivery at a price it set went into a merchant's ledger as a purchase. A punitive expedition went in as an operating cost. A man dead of fever off Ceylon closed a wage account. The clearing of Banda produced a monopoly, and the monopoly produced a margin, and the margin appeared to a shareholder in Amsterdam as a dividend. Not one entry was false. The Company's accounts, so far as anybody could tell and nobody could check, were correctly kept.

Three things follow, and they are the framework's inheritance from this study.

The extraction rate of such an order is not in any schedule; it is the spread between the administered price and the market price, and it is invisible **by construction rather than by concealment**. The disguise in an extraction therefore tracks not the presence of a conscience but the presence of an **accounting relationship** — those from whom

an order takes and who are owed no account get it in the open, and those who finance the taking and must be shown a balance get it under whatever heading the balance recognises. And an order forgets the violence it did far faster than the violence it suffered, because the instrument of forgetting is bookkeeping, and where an act was never recorded as an act there is nothing later to suppress.

The Dutch remembered Naarden and Leiden for four centuries and did not remember Banda at all, and no one had to arrange that.

The counter-position

Now the case against this whole study, put as strongly as it can be put, because it is a strong case and it deserves to be made by someone who believes it rather than caricatured.

You have spent eleven modules applying an instrument built for conquest states to a society that was, by any standard available in its own century, the best place in the world to be an ordinary person.

Consider the list, and consider it whole. This order abolished serfdom before the question arose elsewhere, or rather never had it, and no lord in its territory could arrest, flog, tax or immobilise a peasant. It paid the highest real wages in Europe. It fed its people so well that food riots were rare in a period when they were normal, and it built the best poor relief on the continent. It achieved the highest literacy anywhere in the world and extended it to women. It guaranteed in its founding treaty that no person would be pursued or examined on account of his religion, at a moment when its neighbours were burning people for theirs by the thousand and it had itself buried at least thirteen hundred of its own. It printed, for two centuries, the books that every other state in Europe burned, and gave refuge to Descartes, to the Huguenots, to the Sephardim expelled from Iberia, and to Spinoza, whom no other country in the world would have permitted to write. It invented the funded public debt and the joint-stock corporation and never defaulted on a guilder. And on a population under two million it produced Rembrandt and Vermeer, Huygens and Leeuwenhoek and Boerhaave, Grotius and Spinoza — a return on human capital that has no parallel in the early modern world.

It ended without a massacre. Its own people rose against it roughly twenty-four times in a hundred and ninety-five years, and the largest of those risings was about a tax farmer.

Your framework insists that the floor is real, that the belief is managed, that the extraction runs upward and that the elite defends itself. Fine. All of that is true of every human arrangement that has ever existed, including the ones we now live in. What your instrument cannot do is tell the difference between an order that was better and one that

was worse, and applied to this case it produces a man determined to find the sordid explanation of a demonstrably good outcome — to reduce a real toleration to a coalition term, a real liberty to a jurisdictional accident, and a real prosperity to a purchased quiescence. The Dutch Republic is the single strongest piece of evidence in your entire collection that an order can be genuinely decent to the people under it, and you have written eleven modules explaining that away.

The answer

The list is true. Every item on it is true, and this study has asserted most of them itself, at length, and does not withdraw any of them. A man in Holland in 1650 was better off than a man almost anywhere else on earth, and he knew it, and so did the Germans and Scandinavians and Huguenots and Sephardim who came, and they were right to come. That has to be said first and without qualification, because a study that cannot say it is not describing what happened.

Three answers follow, and the third concedes something the framework must concede.

First: the list describes one of the populations this order held, and by the eighteenth century it was not the largest.

The Republic governed, at its height, several million people in Java, the Moluccas, Ceylon, the Cape and Guiana, plus something like a third of its own European territory — the Generality Lands, Catholic, unrepresented, taxed by an assembly they could not enter, held expressly by right of conquest. Set against that, the Holland wage-earner is not the case; he is one entry in it, and a minority entry at that.

There is no honest way to average those populations, and this study does not propose one. Averaging is precisely the error. **The measurement this case demands is the variance, not the mean** — because an order that runs the lowest coercion in Europe at its centre and clears an archipelago at its edge is not a mixed record to be scored on balance. It is a single machine with a distribution, and the distribution is the fact about it. Three hundred thousand people were landed in Suriname and the enslaved population there never reached fifty thousand at once; something like half a million men left on Company ships and did not come back; the population of the Banda islands was destroyed and replaced. None of that is a qualification to the Leiden weaver's wage. It is the other end of the same instrument.

Second: the decency was a property of a position rather than of a people, and this study can prove it, because the same men occupied a different position in the same decade.

The reason this order was mild at home is not that it valued mildness. It is that it had no instrument for being otherwise and no need of one: the towns that founded it had guaranteed in the founding treaty that no internal garrison would ever exist, and the benefit column was full enough that compliance was rational. Both conditions were contingent, and the record shows exactly what these men did wherever either failed.

In the Generality Lands, taken by conquest rather than by defection, the Republic governed a third of its own territory by precisely the practices it had listed as capital charges against Philip II in 1581 — a foreign administration over the privileges, garrisons in the towns, taxation without consent, and the suppression of a religion whose adherents owed account, as the manifesto had put it, to God alone. And at the commercial frontier, where the benefit column was empty and the accounting was corporate, the same class of men ran Banda, Ambon and Suriname.

That is not an inference. It is a controlled experiment the Dutch conducted on themselves, in the same generation, from the same rooms. **The decency at the centre and the clearance at the edge were decided by the same men in the same decade**, and any account of the Republic that treats the first as its character and the second as its regrettable excess has the causation backwards. Character was not the variable. Position was.

Third — and this is the concession the framework owes — position is not everything, and explaining a liberty is not the same as explaining it away.

Other orders occupied the same commercial position and did not produce these results. England, France, Venice, Genoa, Hamburg and Portugal all had merchants, ships, capital and fragmented jurisdictions of one kind or another, and none of them produced the highest literacy in the world, or a press that printed the forbidden literature of the whole continent, or a clause of 1579 saying that no one should be examined about his religion. Something in this particular arrangement did produce those things, and pointing to the mechanism that generated them is an explanation of a result, not a denial of it.

A man who is not burned is not burned. It does not become less true that he was not burned when one discovers that the reason was a coalition term negotiated by parties who could not agree on a confession. The toleration clause of 1579 was a bargain rather than a principle, and it is also the case that for two centuries afterwards nobody in the Republic was interrogated about his belief, in a Europe that was doing precisely that on an industrial scale. Both statements are true and the second is the one that mattered to the people living under it.

So the framework's proper posture here is not the debunker's. It is the engineer's. The question is not whether the good thing was real — it was — but **how it was**

produced, because that tells you the conditions under which it survives and the conditions under which it goes. And that is a more useful thing to know than an assessment of Dutch virtue, because virtue does not transfer and mechanisms do.

What the mechanism warns

Which brings the study to its point, and it can be stated in three sentences drawn from the eleven modules and directed at nobody in particular.

A liberty produced by competition between jurisdictions exists only on the questions where the jurisdictions compete. The Dutch could not suppress a book because every town wanted the printing trade, and they excluded forty per cent of their own population from every office in the state for two centuries without a single prosecution being necessary, because on that question every town agreed. The freedom and the foreclosure came from one mechanism. Consolidate the jurisdictions, or let them come to agree, and every liberty of that kind evaporates without a right being repealed, because there was never a right — only an elsewhere.

An order held by benefit rather than by belief is not more secure than one held by belief; it is secure on different terms. A belief is a sunk cost that does not reprice. A benefit reprices continuously. The Dutch hold was extraordinarily cheap for two centuries and it was cheap because the arithmetic favoured compliance, and the arithmetic was a running calculation performed afresh by every household every year. Such an order will meet its crises denominated in bread and wages rather than doctrine, without a programme, and it will discover — as this one did — that when its counter-elite finally needs the population, the population's only national attachment is to the apex.

And an extraction booked as commerce is invisible to the people financing it, however free their press. The Dutch Republic had the freest press in Europe and its public could not find the Company's extraction in the accounts, because the accounts were correct. Freedom of information is not the same thing as the existence of a category in which the thing would appear.

Where this leaves the framework

The collection is a set of instruments and this case bent several of them, which is what a case is for.

It established that a floor can be acquired by defection rather than conquest, and that the manner of acquisition writes the constitution and predicts the ending. It established that a settlement can distribute positions rather than possessions, and that

this binds an elite more tightly than land while making its politics a two-century contest over chairs. It established that where an order privileges one formation without being able to compel it, the population does not converge and does not stay blank but sorts into parallel formation-communities whose boundaries become the constitution. It established that a crowded seam at the level of a society is entirely compatible with a captured seam inside every household in it, and that the two must be measured separately. It established that the disguise in an extraction tracks the presence of an accounting relationship rather than of a conscience. It established that a liberty asserted as a grievance is a complaint until some body has the standing and the interest to enforce it, and that a deposition creates no such body. It established that the strength of a default is a function of the number of streams each member draws rather than their size. And it established that where an order manufactured its own ground, the metabolic note is not called at the end but serviced continuously, escalating without notice, and must be read against whatever else that generation's treasury had already promised.

None of that is a verdict on the Dutch. It is a set of statements about arrangements, extracted from the best-documented commercial republic in early modern Europe, and each of them is available to be broken by the next case that does not fit.

What remains is the thing this study has been circling from its first page, and it is not a moral. It is that the two hemispheres of this order were run by one set of men, out of one set of rooms, on the same afternoons — and that the reason the two halves never met is that no position existed from which both were visible, and that this was not arranged by anybody. It was the ordinary consequence of a legal form, a distance, and a category in a ledger.

Marretje Arents was hanged in Amsterdam on 28 June 1748 for leading a riot against the excise on butter. Her husband was in Asia at the time, a soldier in the service of the Company. Neither of those two facts appears in the other's accounts, and both of them were true of the same house on the same day.

A note on sources.

No primary text is quoted in this module. Every fact, figure and quotation it draws on has been established, sourced and caveated in the preceding modules of this study, and the caveats recorded there apply here without repetition: in particular the ranges given for Banda, for the Council of Troubles and Alba's governorship, for the All Saints' Flood of 1570, for the confessional proportions of the Republic's population, and for the VOC personnel totals, none of which this module treats as settled.

Two figures used here in summary form should be flagged again because they are the load-bearing ones. The estimate that roughly three hundred thousand enslaved people were landed in Suriname between 1668 and 1823 while the enslaved population never exceeded about fifty thousand at one time rests on two modern secondary accounts that broadly agree; the estimate that something approaching one million men were carried to Asia on Company ships between 1595 and 1795 with about a third returning derives from the *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping* project of Bruijn, Gaastra and Schöffer as reported in the reference literature. The claim that the Republic governed several million people overseas by the eighteenth century is an order-of-magnitude statement and is not drawn from a specific census; the Company's directly administered populations in Java, Ceylon and the archipelago are variously estimated and this study has not attempted to total them.

The counter-position in this module is stated in my own words. It is not a quotation from, or a paraphrase of, any particular historian, and it should not be read as such; it is an attempt to assemble the strongest available case for the Dutch Republic from the material this study has itself established, and if it fails to be the strongest available case, the failure is mine and not that of the scholars who have made versions of it better.

Nothing here has been reconstructed from memory.